YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

volume 2

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PREFACE

In 1972, when questions for the first volume of "Your Questions Answered" were being edited, it was found that Mr. Dhikiri Omari Mohamed Kiondo's correspondence with the Mission could form a separate volume of its own. The result was this Second volume in the series, "Your Questions Answered", which was edited at that time, though its publication was delayed.

Mr. Dhikiri Kiondo was born in 1946, at Kwemiinu village (District Lushoto, Tanga Region, Tanzania). His grandfather was the traditional Chief of the Wakilindi clan of the Wasambaa tribe. His father was a farmer and a staunch Muslim of Sunni faith. He did not like to send his only son to any school as he was afraid that his son would be converted to Christianity (as was common in those days). As a result he started his education late. He was enrolled in a Native Administration School and then was sent to a Qur'anic school, which he left in 1954 owing to bad health; and then his father died and he could not go back to school.

In 1955, he was enrolled in a Mission school and completed his Primary, (1958), Middle (1962) and Secondary (1966) education at various school run by U.M.C.A. One of his subjects was Bible knowledge. He was selected for Teachers Training Course at Butimba T. T. College, Mwanza (1967-68).

It was from Butimba that he wrote his first letter to us, asking 24 questions which showed that he was an intelligent youth eager to learn the truth about Islam; and also that he was completely in darkness about Shi'ism. I replied to him and the correspondence continued.

In 1969, he was employed as a teacher in Lushoto District, and at the end of that year I invited him to embrace the Shia faith (letter No. 16), which he gladly did (letter No. 19).

We first met in August, 1970, when I went to see him at National Service camp at Oljoro. Third day he came to Arusha where he was introduced to Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff and Haji Ahmad Hussein Sheriff. He refers to this meeting in letter No. 26.

In August, 1973, he was sent by the Mission to Iran to study under the patronage of 'A Group of Muslim Brothers', Tehran, from where he returned in September, 1974. In February, 1975, he resigned his teaching post to become the Administrative Secretary of this Mission. He is married (2 wives) with 5 children.

The Mission hopes that this booklet will be received as enthusiastically as the first volume was. The reader will be interested to note the gradual development of Mr. Dhikiri's questions demonstrating how he came nearer to us and found the true happiness and peace of mind that he began searching for when he first wrote to us.

While replying. I always copied his questions in my letters; therefore, those questions have been omitted from his letters.

30th November, 1975, Dares Salaam.

S.S.Akhtar Rizvi

Chief Missionary

Letters and Questions

Dhikri O. Mohammed Kiondo

Butimba Teachers' trainingCollege,

Mwanza/Tanzania

14th February, 1968

The Secretary,

The Shia Ithna-asheri Council of Tanzania

Dar es Salaam

Dear Sir,

ASKING FOR A RELIGIOUS HELP

I would be very pleased if you could let me know something about your faith Ithna-asheria in particular and the Shia sects as a whole.

I am a Muslim of the Sunni faith.

My aim is to know where the truth really is.

As I know nothing about Koranic writing, I would request you to write your answers to my first 24 questions with koranic 'ayas' or 'Hadith' where they fit.

Lastly, I ask Allah to assist you in whatsoever you do.

Your brother in Islamic faith

Dhikri O. Mohammed Kiondo

20th February, 1968

Dear Brother In Islam,

Your letter, dated 14th instant, addressed to the secretary, Shia Ithna-asheri Council of Tanzania, was passed to me for reply. I was very much impressed by the intelligent and brilliant questions asked by you. In fact, the questions show the interest you have in religion.

I would like to write the detailed answers to these questions; but I am going just now to pilgrimage of Hajj, and from there I will go on a tour of Middle East. I hope to be back in June, Insha-Allah.

As you will appreciate, these questions should not be replied in a hurry, creating more questions than answering.

Meanwhile, I am sending some literature to you, in Swahili and English. You will find answers to many of your questions there. The remaining few questions will be answered when I come back.

Once again thanking you,

Sincerey Yours,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

3/8/1968

Dear Brother In Islam,

Assalaamu Alaikum,

Sorry to keep you waiting so long. I came back from Hajj and Ziyarat in the 3rd week of June. There was some more delay in writing to you, because I had to deal with some very urgent matters.

Now, I have been able to deal with your questions, which, please find enclosed.

I hope you will not hesitate in writing to me if you want some further clarifications. I assure you that your letters will be attended to promptly.

With Salaams,

Yours in Islam,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

Question:
What is the meaning of Shia ?
Answer:
The word 'Shia' is from Arabic word 'At-Tashayo' which means 'to follow'. This word has been used for the followers of the Prophets of Allah in the Holy Qur'an :-

(a) "Hadha min Shiatihi wa hadha min aduwwihi Fas-taghathahul ladhi min Shiatihi alal-ladhi min aduwwihi" (Qur'an, 28:15).

This is from his Shias (followers) and that from his enemies.And he who was of his (Moses') Shias asked his help against him who was of his enemies.

(b) "Wa inna min Shiatihi la Ibrahim" (Qur'an, 37:83).

And, verily, of his (Noah's) Shias (followers) is Ibrahim.

We are called Shia because we follow the Holy Prophet according to the way shown by Hazrat Ali and other sinless members of the family of the Holy Prophet.

In fact, it was the Holy Prophet himself who named the followers of Hazrat Ali as 'Shia'.

The famous Sunni Scholars, Allamah Ibn Hajar Makki (in his book, 'As-Sawaiqul-Muhriqua') and Allamah Ibn Athir (in his book, 'Nihaya') record that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said :-

'O Ali, verily thou wilt come before Allah; thou and thy Shias, happily, and Allah will be pleased with you.'

Another Sunni Scholar, Imam Suyuti, records in his "Tafseer Ad-Durrul-Manthur" that the Holy Prophet said pointing towards Ali : "He and his Shias are those who will be successsful in Quiyamat". For further detail I would like you to read my article "Origin of Shia" in "The Light" (Sep.-Oct. 1967). (See Appendix 'A').

Question :
How many Divisions have you ?

Answer:
At present there are two sects calling themselves Shia :

(a) Ithna-asheriya, and (b) Ismailiya.

Ismailiya again are sub-divided between Bohras and followers of H. H. The Aga Khan. It is this later sub-sect which is commonly known as 'Ismailiya' in East Africa.

There is one sect in Yemen, called Zaidiyya, which is often grouped under Shia Sects. But they follow Mutazilites in their beliefs and Imam Abu Hanifa in the matters of Sheriat. So they should be grouped under Sunni sects not shia.

Question :
Why do the other divisions don't exist in East Africa ?

Answer:
With exception of above mentioned Zaidiyya, all other sects are found here.

Question:
How do the rest differ from yours ?

Answer:
This is a question which cannot be fully answered without writing a book of theology.

Still, I will try to give here just a glimpse of the main differences. The Shia Ithna-asheriya believe that:

i. All the Prophets and their successors (Imams) were infallible (Masoom).
ii. Imams must be appointed by Allah and that appointment is known through the announcement of the Holy Prophet or the preceding Imam.
iii. There are 12 successors (one after another) of our Holy Prophet.

Now :

(a) Zaidiya say that it is not necessary for an Imam to be infallible or appointed by God. Any Muslim, calling to Islam by way of Jihad, is an Imam.

(b) Ismailiya (both sects) believe in more than 12 Imams and both differ from us about the nature and meaning of Imamat, as well as the position of Imam in the religion.

Question :
Why did you give your Division this particular name — Ithna-asheriya ?

Answer:
'Ithna-asher' is the Arabic for 'twelve'. As stated above, we believe in 12 Imams after the Holy Prophet, hence this name.

Question :
Who can become an Ithna-asheriya ?

Answer:
Any person, irrespective of his origin, can become Ithna-asheriya, if he sincerely believes in our tenents,

Question :
Do you agree with the five principles of Islam — that is;

i. Believe that there is one God (Allah) and Muhammad (S.A.W.) is His Prophet;

ii. Prayer;

iii. Fasting in the month of Ramadhan;

iv. Paying the Zaka;

v. Making the Hijja ?

Do you agree with the six principles of Iman — that is, believe in:-

i. One God — "Allah";

ii. Angels;

iii. Holy Books;

iv. Prophets;

v. Resurrecction;

vi. Will of God (Qudra) ?

Do you believe that Quran is a Book from Allah and is free from errors?

Answer:
Yes. Had you seen Islam', there would have been no need to ask such questions.

Question:
Do you believe that the "Traditions" (Hadith) of our Holy Prophet is the second important Book in Islam ?

Answer :
Yes, if a tradition is authentic, it is to be followed and obeyed, without any 'ifs' and 'buts'. For your information, there is no "Book" called "Traditions". Traditions are collected by various scholars in their books.

Question:
Do you agree that any one who changes the "ayas' or the meaning of any of the two books (Quran and Hadith) is Kafir?

Answer:
Anybody who 'knowingly' changes any 'aya' of the Holy Qur'an, is Kafir. Also, if he changes its meaning 'knowing it to be false' he is Kafir, or at least 'Munafique' (hypocrite).

Here, I would like you to understand what is the sure way of knowing the meaning of Qur'an.

Allah has said:

"He it is who hath revealed unto thee (Muhammad) the Scripture wherein are clear revelations — They are the substance of the Book — and others (which are) allegorical. But those in whose hearts is doubt pursue, forsooth, that which is allegorical, seeking to cause dissention by seeking to explain it (as they like). But no one knows its meaning except God and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge.... " (Qur'an 3:6).

So the true meaning and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an cannot be known except from those who are firmly grounded in knowledge and whose knowledge is from the knowledge of Prophet.

And the Prophet said 'I am the City of Knowledge and Ali is its Gate'.

Also he said : "I am leaving behind among you, two most precious things

1. The Book of Allah.......and
2. My descendants who are my family; and they will not separate from each other until they come to me near Kauther in Quiyamat".

Therefore, to understand the Qur'an, it is essential to seek guidance from Ahlul-Bait.

Question :

Do you also use the other six Books :

1. *Sahih of Bukhari ?*
2. *Sahih of Muslim ?*
3. *Kitab-us-Sunan of Abu Daud ?*
4. *Sahih of Tirmidhy ?*
5. *Kitab-us-Sunan of Nasai ?*
6. *Kitab-us-Sunan of Ibn Maja ?*

Answer:

I must make it clear that no collection of the Traditions is free from falsified or weak traditions. Therefore, we, like the scholars of Sunni Sect, judge every tradition on its merit.

We "use" (to use your own word !) the above-mentioned books of traditions edited by Sunni scholars as well as other books of Shia scholars, applying the same test everywhere without discrimination.

Question :

Which scholar's books do you use for "Sheria ?"

Answer:

There are hundreds of books in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Gujarati, Turkish, Bengali, Sindhi, Punjabi, Hindi, Kashmiri, (and recently in Swahili, English, German and French) and other languages, explaining the Shariat of Islam according to the Shia Ithna-asheri madhhab.

There are books of Shariat right from the 2nd century of Hijra still extant. Therefore, it is not possible to give you a list of the books of Fiqh (which is referred to in your letter as 'Shariat'). But currently the book most used by Shia scholars in East Africa is 'Minhaj-us-Saleheen' (2 parts) by the greatest Mujtahid of our time, Syed Mohsin-al-Hakeem (Najaf - Iraq).

Question:

Does your belief allow you to extend the books of Sharia more than your scholars did, to sweet the modern life ?

Answer:

I could not understand this question. Will you, please, elaborate it ?

Question :

Why do you think that Seyyidina Ali should be the First Khalifa and not the Fourth as Sunnis believe ?

Answer:
You may understand some reasons from the article "Origin of Shia" mentioned earlier.

Imamat in our madh-hab means succession to the Prophet in Temporal and Spiritual Headship of the Community of Muslims. There are many conditions of Imamat, some of which are given here :-

(1) **Ismat:** It means that Imam must be Masum, i.e., sinless and infallible. The reasons given for sinlessness of the Prophets apply here also.

(2) **Appointment by God:** Never in the history of religions (Judaism, Christianity) public was given the power to appoint the successor of a Prophet. Qur'an declares that even a prophet as great as Hadhrat Musa (a.s.) was not given the power to select his own successor. He prayed to ALLAH and He appointed Hadhrat Haroon (a.s.) for that office. Also Allah says in Qur'an : *"Thy Lord creates whatever He wishes and selects; there is no power of choice for men". (Qur'an 28:68).* Therefore, as no Prophet was ever elected by the people, likewise no successor of the Prophet may be elected by the people. It is clear that if he will be appointed by the people, his first loyalty will be towards the people, not towards God.

(3) Imam must be above all people in all virtues, like knowledge, bravery, patience, justice, piety, love of God, faith and good deeds etc.

Now something about Appointment of Ali by God through our Holy Prophet:

The most famous of all occasions when the Holy Prophet declared the Imamat of Ali is the pronouncement at Khum. The facts in full details are given in many Sunni books. For instance, Mishkat-ul-Masabih, Kanzul-ummal (Vol. vi, pp. 390, 397, 399) and Khasaais by Imam Nasai (p. 48). The Prophet's words, as quoted in the last-mentioned two books, contain this declaration "Verily Allah is my Mawla, and I am the Mawla of every believer". Then he took the hands of Ali and said: "Everyone whose Mawla am I, Ali is his Mawla", (i.e. Master).

The chain of Wilayat, right from Allah up to Ali, or as is generally said, from Prophet to Ali, does not leave any room for any doubt about the meaning of the word 'Mawla'. The same meaning which can be applied for Allah and the Holy Prophet (i.e., Master) must be applied for Ali.

Moreover, in almost all narrations of Khum these words are preceded by the tradition mentioned above, i.e., "I am leaving behind among you, two precious things, The Book of God and my Ahlul-Bait.......".

Any unprejudiced person, seeing these arrangements of Khum (the waiting for those who had remained behind, calling back those who had gone ahead, preparing a high platform in the burning sun of Arabian midday, and then delivering a long lecture and making those declarations) must admit that all this could not have been just to say thaht Ali should be loved by the Muslims (as some Sunni scholars want us to interpret the word 'Mawla'). Allah and His Prophet were not just beloved of the Muslims; they were and are their Masters. So is Ali.

I have heard some Sunni brethren admitting the meaning of Mawla and then adding, "We accept that it was the 'wish of the Prophet' that Ali should be his successor. But the facts did not conform to his wish; and now we should accept whoever was accepted by the people". There are many fallacies in this argument:

(a) Qur'an declared that the Prophet never spoke of his own accord. Whatever he told, it was the command and Wahi (revelation) from God. Once you say that it was the 'Wish of the Prophet', you must admit that it was the 'Command of God'.

(b) People never had, and will never have, any right to cancel, or argue about, any decision made by Allah or His Prophet. The ayat of Qur'an says, *"When Allah and His Prophet made any decision, there was no choice left for the believers"* (Qur'an, 33:37).

(c) All the companions of the Prophet were non-Maasum (i.e., they were not sinless). Nobody has any doubt about it, And the Prophet was Maasum (sinless, infallible). Billions of non-Maasums put together have no right to challenge or change the decision of a Maasum.

(d) To say that when the companions of the Prophet did not follow the announcement of Khum, we also should do likewise, is to say that the companions of the Prophet (and not the Holy Prophet himself) were the real representatives of Allah.

(e) Some say that what was done at Saquifa (selection of Caliph Abu Bakr) was a manifestation of the Will of Allah. But this trend of thought pre-supposes that whatever is done by man is actually done by Allah. Most of the Muslim scholars refute this thinking. And if anybody believes in such creed, he must accept that rejection of the Khilafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr by Bibi Fatenm (Lady of the women of Paradise, the daughter of the Prophet) and by the Shias is also an act of God.

Question :
Is the missing of the Caliphate to Seyyidina Ali after the death of our Holy Prophet the main reason of your break-up, or there are other reasons accompanied by this ?

Answer:
In a way you may say so. But as the chance to guide the Muslims in a proper way was denied to Hadhrat Ali, the Muslims began to go away in whatever direction they saw fit. As a result, there emerged beliefs that were not Islamic at all. And now we have in Muslim world scores of sects all differing among themselves about Allah, His Prophets, about practices of Sheriat etc.

It would have been better if you would not have used the word 'break-up' in this question. Because, as a prominent Indian writer said in this context, "being in a minority does not necessarily mean that the smaller group had 'broken up' from the main stream. Rather it might be that the majority, by involving itself in the politics of power and glamour of wordly success, had deviated from the original teachings, while the minority stuck to the path shown by the founder of Islam".

If you want to know more about this subject, please refer to Islam' and to the article 'How Hasan and Husain Saved The Religion From Deterioration' (Light, Sept., 1966). (Now also "Imamat" is recommended).

Question :
Do you believe the story of Miraji ?

Answer:
We believe that our Holy Prophet ascended with body up to 'Arsh' at least once while he was at Mecca.

Question :
Do you pray five times a day or four times a day as indicated in the Qur'an?

Are your prayers like those of the Sunnis, that is (a) Fajr 2 rakaas; (b) Dhuhur 4 rakaas; (c)

Asr 4 rakaas; (d) Maghrib 3 rakaas and (e) Isha 4 rakaas ?

How do you call for prayers ?

How do you aim at prayers (e.g., saying 'Usalli faradh Subh') ?

What are the necessary steps to follow so as to fulfil (i) Prayer; (ii) Fasting (iii) Zaka (iv) Hijja ?

Answer:
We pray 5 times (not 4 times) and there is no difference in the number of Rakaas. For further details please refer to our 'Kitabu Cha Sala' and 'Kitabu Cha Saumu'. (Now "Elements of Islamic Studies" is recommended).

Question :
What are the obligations of a Shia Muslim to God, Prophet, Caliph, Living Parents, Imam, Neighbour, Orphan, Ruler, Government, Widow, Stranger, Poor, Wife, Money, Child, Non-Muslim, Religion as a whole and Country ?

What are the obligations of a ruler to Citizens, Government servants, Soldiers, Government money, Religion and its leaders, Poors, Wives and children of those who died for their country and faith ?

Answer:
There is a tradition of our 4th Imam Ali Zainul-Abedeen, son of Imam Husain, describing the duties of a Muslim towards his fellows. That tradition is the cream of Islamic ethics. It is not possible to give that tradition, because space does not allow it. Its translation has been published as "Reciprocal Rights". (It is available from this Mission).

Question:
What are the qualifications of (i) Caliph, (ii) Imarn, (iii) Lawyer, (iv) Treasurer, (v)General of the army ?

Answer:
I have already mentioned the qualifications and conditions necessary for an Imam (or as you say, Caliph). Anyhow, if by Imam' you mean 'one who leads in prayers' then he, in addition to other necessary qualifications, must be 'Aadi!', i.e. one who does not commit any Kabirah (big) sin even by mistake and does not repeat any Saghirah (small) sin if committed by mistake.

About others :

1. Lawyer: Lawyer, as known today, is not recognised in Islam. Of course, there were and are experts of Islamic Laws.
2. Treasurer and General of the Army: They were to be appointed by the Holy Prophet or the Imam, and it is their prerogative whom to appoint. But generally speaking, they must be honest, brave and knowing the rules of Sheriat concerning their duties and responsibilities.

Question:
How do you judge the following :

Thief; One who uses witchcraft; Robber; Liar; One who commits adultery; One who commits adultery with an animal; A murderer; One who steals or uses a thing put Wakf without proper permission; A child born unlawfully; One who reveals others' shamefulness;

One who tries to destroy faith; A political prisoner ?

Answer:
Islamic Penal-Code is very reasonable. The following facts must be mentioned here :

i. There is a difference between sin and crime. Every crime is a sin but not vice versa.

ii. Sins and crimes are sometimes against God and sometimes against other people.

iii. Tawba (repentance) is a recognised factor in this Code. The important conditions of Tawba' are that:

(a) He should repent to please Allah, not to avoid any material harm;

(b) he should have a firm resolve not to commit that sin again,

(c) if the sin is against God and can be amended, he should do so at once,

(d) if the sin is against other people and can be amended, he does so at once; otherwise, he should ask pardon from the wronged party.

Thus if a man, for example, steals something and then repents (with all the conditions mentioned above, including the return of stolen thing to the owner), before the owner lodges the case against him in a Qadhi's court, there will be no case against him at all. "A man who repents from sin is like a man who never sinned". (Holy Prophet).

This highest standard of justice and mercy cannot be found in any other code of law.

Now, if someone is brought before a Qadhi, without any trace of repentance, he deserves punishment to save society from his mischief.

Again, the crimes, in Islamic penal Code, are of two kinds : Those whose punishment has been fixed in the Qur'an; and those whose punishment has been left to the discretion of the Qadhi. Even fixed punishments are of different grades for any given crime. A man who kills another man, can be set free or made to pay blood-money or put in prison or put to death, according to the circumstances mentioned in the Qur'an.

Now about the matters mentioned by you (only the maximum punishment is mentioned here) :

Political prisoner: Political difference, in itseif is neither a sin nor a crime in Islam.

An Illegitimate child, in Shia law, is not treated as a sinner. The parents are liable to punishment, but not the child.

Lie is a sin, but not a crime.

Revealing others' shamefulness: A person who accuses a married woman of adultery (without sufficient proof) is to be whipped 80 times. In other cases, there is no fixed punishment.

Destroying the Faith and using Wakf property without proper right, have no fixed punishment.

Witch-craft: A Muslim, if guilty of witch-craft, is to be killed.

Theft: Cutting four fingers of the right hand, leaving the thumb intact.

Robbery: Highway robbery with violence carries the punishment

Adultery: An adulterer is to be stoned to death.

Sodomy: Killing and burning the corpse.

Committing indecent act with an animal: No fixed punishment. But generally he is whipped 25 times. The animal is to be killed and its meat destroyed.

Murder: It carries the punishment of death.

Stealing from Wakf property: The punishment is on the discretion of the Qadhi.

Question :
Which days of the Islamic year do you observe ? What are the importance of those days ?

Answer:
In addition to the Fridays, Id-ul-Fitr, Idul-Adh-ha and the Holy month of Ramadhan, we arrange lectures on birthdays and death anniversaries of the Holy Prophet and 12 Imams.

Question:
What is the proper way of (1) marrying; (2) Inheriting ?

Answer:
Please refer to the 'Light' (July-August, 1967) in which our memorandum about matrimonial affairs, submitted to the Commission set up by Kenya Government, was published

Another memorandum, submitted to another commission of the Kenya Government, on the laws of Will and Inheritance, is published in this issue.

I hope you will find these writings more comprehensive and will realise the beauty of Islamic sheriat as defined by the family of our Holy Prophet and preserved in Shia madhhab.

Question :
Do you allow other Muslims to pray in your mosques ?

Answer:
Yes, willingly. Mosque is the house of Allah. And everybody within the sphere of Islam has a right to pray in it. Only recently we renovated our mosque in Bagamoyo (though there is no Shia Ithna-asheri there since last 40 years) so that our Sunni brethern may use it.

Question:
How do you relate with other Muslims, for example, the Sunnis ? How do you think this relation can be improved ?

For example : the world Muslims decide a unity of all "Madh-habs", what regulations would you (the Shia) demand before you accept any unity ?

Answer:
We have brotherly relations with the Sunnis. You would never have heard of any trouble between us and our Sunni brethern in the countries where we are in majority, like Iran and Iraq.

But I think, the word 'Unity of Madh-habs' is misleading. 'Unity of Madh-habs' cannot be achieved in any way. If you are to take something, from Shafiis, others from Hanafis, still others from Shias and so on, it will not please any group. In fact, it will be a new sect, in conflict with all the existing sects. What is actually required is tolerance, cooperation and respect for each other's views.

Our late Mujtahid, Seyyid Husain al-Burujurdi, of Iran, joined hands with the late Mufti of

Al-Azhar (Egypt), Sheikh Shaltut, to establish a joint institution, Dar-ut-Taqureeb-Bainal-Madhahib-il-Islamia, to bring two main sects, Sunnis and Shias, closer. They decided that the students of both sects should be taught the tenets and laws of the other sect, to remove misunderstanding and prejudice which are bred mainly by ignorance.

Such ventures must be carried on in every Muslim country. Catholics, Orthodox and Protestant Christians are coming together, without sacrificing their own beliefs and practices. Muslims can do it in a better way and with far better results (because our differences are trivial if compared with the differences between the Christians).

And we Must do it. The sooner the better.

15th September, 1968

Dear Maulana,

Excuse me for being late in writing to you concerning the receipt of your registered letter.

I was out to Musoma for Teaching Practice.

I would like to congratulate you for the great work you have carried out in order to answer my questions.

I also, should thank you in this letter, for uncovering the thick blanket which sheltered me from happiness and being proud of my brethren — the Shias,

You have given me a helpful knowledge of your sect.

Concerning question 9 (ii) : My aim was to ask 'whether your Shia scholars allow to add more points to the former Shariat which can be used for actions of the modern life:- for example, judging people who try to change sex as done in some parts of the world like U.S.A. ?

I would like to apologize for using the word 'break-up' in question 11.I would ask you to be patient about my mistakes, for I have very little knowledge of Islam. I have been schooling in Christian schools for twelve years. As the result, I have more knowledge of Christianity than I have of Islam.

Now, I am trying to get what I should have got earlier, that is the knowledge of Islam.

Please, Maulana, I have several other questions which makes me ask for your help — as a Muslim, not as a Shia only.

1. I heard that our Holy Prophet said that Islam will split or be divided into 73 sects.
    i. May I get a list of these 73 sects ?
    ii. For each may I get a short reason of how it differs from other sects.
    iii. Have all these sects already existed in the world or are we to expect others to come ?
    iv. Should we include Baha'ism and Ahmmadiya to the sects of Islam ?
2. How can I deny that people were converted into Islam by "SWORD" (that is force) ?
3. The Christians have written in several of their books that our Holy Prophet was suffering from epilepsy. Is this true ?
4. Is there any particular reason why we Muslims should put pig and dog to the highest degree of impurity among all animals ?
5. May I know the Holy Generation from Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) to Hazrat Muhammad (a.s.).

6. Is there any possibility for me to take the "Quranic Arabic" as a language so that I can read any book written in Arabic and understand it?

Lastly I would like to ask whether I can buy Islamic books translated into English from you like "Qur'an", "Hadith" and Historical books of Islam.

Your Brother in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Mohamed Kiondo.

6th October, 1968

Dear Brother in Islam,

Thank you for your letter dated 15th September, 1968. I will write detailed answers in about 4 or 5 weeks. I hope you will not mind this delay.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

Mwanza : 15th October, 1968.

Dear Maulana,

Thank you for your letter of 6th October, 1968, which informs me that you are now trying to get detailed answers to my questions.

I will complete my course in this town on 24/10/1968 and will leave this place. Therefore, I will ask you, kindly to send the answers using this address :-

Mr. Dhikiri Omari Mohamed Kiondo,
Kwemkole Village,
c/o Kizara Upp. Primary School,
P.O. Korogwe / Tanzania.

Thanking you,

Your Brother in Islam,

Dhikiri Omari Mohamed Kiondo.

25th October, 1968

Dear Brother in Islam,

I was glad to hear that you have now completed your training. May Allah Bless you with success in this life and Najat in the life hereafter. Amin.

Why not try to get your posting at Dar es Salaam ? If you are here we can teach you Arabic and other religious subjects.

Meanwhile, you can learn Arabic from "Arabic by Radio" programme of Cairo radio. It comes on 16.99 or 17690 kcs, at 9.20 p.m. on Tuesdays and Sundays. You should write to Arabic by Radio, P.O. Box 325, Cairo, U.A.R., to send you the books connected with this programme. It will come to you free of charge.

If you happen to pass through Kampala, you may purchase a translation of the Holy Quran from M/s. M. H. Ali & Co., P.O. Box 2597, Kampala. I am afraid there is no English translation of Hadith books.

As for your question about spreading Islam by Sword, remember that the Holy Prophet never fought except in defence.

After the Holy Prophet, it is justified to say that "Arab Imperialism" (not Islam) was spread by sword. But Islam was not the main concern of many of the early rulers of Muslim world. As a matter of fact, Bani Umaiyyah did not like any body to embrace Islam because it meant decrease in "Jaziya" revenue.

This is a very vast subject. But I will leave it here.

Yours sincerely,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

6th December, 1968.

Dear Maulana,

Thank you very much for the registered letter of the answers to my questions.

You have opened my mind so widely that, now I need much studies on Islam. But my problem is how I should approach them. Can you advice me ? Are you ready to teach me through correspondence ?

I am ready to pay any amount of fees required.

Lastly, I would ask God to bless you in your career, give you long life and help Islam.

Good wishes from me in this month of Ramadhan and Idd-el-Fitr as well.

Your brother in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Muhammad Kiondo.

16th December, 1968.

Dear Brother,

I have given the replies to your questions about epilepsy and pork in the Light which is in the press and will be sent to you in due course. Meanwhile, I am enclosing a copy of the article 'Was the Holy Prophet an epileptic ?' for your study. (Now see "Qur'an and Hadith" published by this Mission).

(PORK is now published as a booklet).

The answer about the sects of Islam is also enclosed herewith, (see Appendix 'B').

So far as the genealogy of the Holy Prophet is concerned, I would like to mention two things first :

(a) The genealogy from the Holy Prophet up to 'Adnaan' is without any difference of opinion. From Adnaan up to 'Qedar', (or Kedar) there are many differences in different traditions.' This Qedar was son of Hazrat Ismail who was the son of Hazrat Ibrahim.

(b) For many reasons, I am of the opinion that those traditions which give about 38 to 40 names between Adnaan and Qedar are nearer to the truth. But as, owing to the differences of the traditionalists, a firm stand cannot be taken, it is better to leave that portion of genealogy unmentioned here.

The names from the Holy Prophet up to Adnaan are as follows:-

Muhammad (s.a.w.) — Abdullah — Abdul-Muttalib — Hashim — Abdu Manaf — Quusai — Kilaab — Murrah — Kaab — Lui — Ghaalib — Fahr — Malek — Nadhar — Kanana — Khozaima — Mudrikah — Ilyas — Nizaar — Muid — Adnaan.

About your question regarding additions in the 'Sheriat': The sheriat of Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet and explained by his 12 successors during a long period of 250 years, contains a most comprehensive set of rules. Whenever a seemingly new question crops up — in which our Sunni brethern cannot find satisfaction from their books and resort to 'Rai' (opinion of their own) — our Mujtahids simply find out some traditions from the Prophet or any of the Imams and act accordingly.

About the institution of Ijtihad, please see the booklet 'Islam' (at the end of the chapter of Imamat). Our Sunni brethren closed the door of Ijtihad (religious research) after the 4 mujtahids (Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafii, Ahmad bin Hanbal). Therefore, they became backward in the matters of Islamic Law. It is only since last century that they started again the research on Muslim Law. But they are so primitive, in comparison to the Shia Ithna-asheri Law that cannot be described in this short letter. Suffice it to say that they slept for one thousand years when the Shias kept the torch of Ijtihad shining. Therefore, thanks to our sound and perfect directions (received from our Imams), we never become baffled when a seemingly new problem comes in our way. Our Mujtahids give rulings, based not on their own opinion but on some sound religious traditions and the matter is settled.

For example, Sunnis are still debating whether birth control (by medicines or contraceptives) is allowed. But owing to the guidance given by the Holy Prophet and the Imams in such conditions, our present Mujtahid, Seyyid Muhsin al-Hakim (Iraq) declared that it is allowed provided it does not harm the health of either party, is done by consent of both parties, and does not lead to abortion.

Now this matter is settled in Shia sect.

What I want to say is this. It was to explain the Sheriat to the full extent that Allah decreed through the Holy Prophet that there would be 12 Imams from the family of the Holy Prophet. Our Sunni brethren did not follow this ruling; they went to everyone for guidance, except the family members of the Holy Prophet. As a result, they are still groping in the dark, while the Shias have no problem at all.

For us the door of knowledge is not shut tight. I hope you will understand our stand perfectly.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

30th December, 1968

Dear Brother,

Thank you for your letter dated 6th instant. I am glad to see that you want to increase your religious knowledge through correspondence course.

I am thinking of preparing a course for interested and intelligent people like you. But I think there will be a delay of about 6 months in starting this course.

I will inform you as soon as the course is ready.

Sincerely yours,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

Dear Maulana,

I was very glad when I arrived home during my holiday in February, to see books, pamphlets and a letter from you telling me that you are now preparing a Correspondence Course for such people like me.

I should thank God for giving you such thoughts, and pray for the blessing of your plan.

I would like to inform you that, now I am working here as a teacher. You can use the above address for anything concerning me.

Your Brother in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Muhammad Kiondo.

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13 March, 1969.

Dear Brother,

I sent you some booklets by book-post some weeks ago, but have not got any indication whether it reached you safely.

I am going for about 3 months to India for the marriage of my daughter and will be back at the end of June, Insh-Allah.

After my return, I intend to start correspondence course, which was asked by you.

In the meantime, I would like you to go through the booklets which were sent to you.

Wishing you happiness and success.

Sincerely yours,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

8th September, 1969.

Dear Maulana,

I kindly ask you to go through my questions carefully and answer them for me.

The purpose of such questions is simply to increase my Islamic knowledge and in some cases to understand how the Shias take some cases and compare with the Sunnis.

I think you will not be angry with my questions at all.

Your Brother in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Muhammad Kiondo.

30th September, 1969.

Dear Mr. Dhikiri Omari,

Thank you for your two letters. I will be coming to Lushoto some time at the end of October, and will be pleased to meet you for the first time.

I will send the replies to your question as soon as possible.

Correspondence course has been put off for 1970, as, at present we are busy in re-organising Light and Sauti Ya Bilal and in publishing some of our books.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

24th November, 1969.

Dearest S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

How are you Mauiana ! ! !

I was very pleased to hear that you were aiming at visiting Lushoto in the end of last month (October, 1969) trying to meet me if possible for the first time.

Unfortunately, I was not here, when your letter arrived. I was at Kwemkole organizing the work of building my house.

I arrived here on 24/10/69 and returned back to Lushoto very soon when I received your letter to wait for your arrival there.

I thought our Lord God has counted you in taking part in the Maulidi which was to be celebrated for the birth of my first born child (daughter born on 21/10/69) at Lushoto.

I would have invited you to this ceremony if it had not come to my mind that it would have troubled you much for you are far from Lushoto and that you are just arriving from India.

I was also late in informing you that I will meet you at Lushoto. Did you come ? Please let me know when you will be coming, if you did not; so that I may meet you there.

I also would like to know whether you would like to see my village — Kwemkole, Korogwe — so that I may arrange and choose the best holidays of the year; possible for communication.

Sunga is 35 miles north of Lushoto. We have daily bus leaving Lushoto for Sunga at 12 noon.

When you come to Lushoto, ask to see Muallim Seffu Abdallah (my uncle) or Muallim Omari Amiri (my best friend). They will bring you here.

Your Brother in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Muhammad Kiondo.

11th December, 1969.

Dear Dhikiri Omari,

Please accept 'Eid Mubarak' on this auspicious day of Eid-ul-Fitr. I went to Tanga at the end of October I tried to go to Lushoto just to see you, as I had promised in my letter. But people pointed out that those being the holidays, perhaps you would have gone home. Therefore, I did not persue the idea.I am glad to hear that you have got a child. My congratulations.

As I intended to meet you, I did not send the replies to your questions earlier. Now, that it seems that we will not be able to see each other for some time more, I am sending the replies to you and hope that you would be satisfied.

It appears to me that your intelligence compels you to question many tenets and practices of your ancestral faith (Sunni-ism). I cannot blame you, because that faith has some tenets which no logical mind can accept without reservations (just as Christianity cannot be explained to a logical mind).

During the last two years we have developed a firm bond of love and brotherhood between ourselves. And I think it would be a betrayal of confidence if I do not tell you frankly that you cannot attain the peace of mind unless you follow the path shown by the Holy Prophet and his Holy Ahlul-Bait. I mean, Shia Ithna-asheri faith, which is the true Islam as brought

by the Prophet. Therefore, I cordially and with full confidence invite you to accept Shi'ism, so that your intellect and faith remain no longer in conflict with each other.

I hope you will write to me as soon as possible, so that I may guide you about the details.

With best wishes and Dua,

Yours Brotherly,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

Question:
What are the necessary points that may lead to counting a child as illegitimately born ?

Answer:
If the man and woman at the time of the conception of the child were not married to each other lawfully (or, at least, were not under the impression of already being lawfully married) the child will be illegitimate.

Question:
Can a child born illegitimately be converted to being lawfully born?

Answer:
No.

Question:
Suppose a man makes a girl pregnant before they are married (but both of them aimed at marriage and could not control their sexual urge till their marriage), will the child be counted as illegitimately born?

Answer:
Yes. He will still be illegitimate. Remember that Islam does not allow a person to mingle with a member of opposite sex (who is not within his/her prohibited degree — like mother, father, sister, brother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, uncle, nephew etc.) or with whom he/she is not legally married. For this reason, the mixing of men and women who are strangers to each other (in the sense mentioned above) is strictly prohibited in Islam. And the wisdom of this rule can be very well confirmed by the subject of your question itself.

Now, if somebody breaks a law, he must be prepared to suffer its consequences. If the said man and woman were so anxious to save their offspring from the stigma of illegitimacy, they should have remained separate till marriage. Or, alternatively, they could have married themselves before indulging in their sexual activities. After all, marriage in Islam is a very simple and swift process. It is a matter between the man and the woman and reciting the formula of Nikah is not the prerogative of any sheikh or scholar. Any body can perform his/her own Nikah, provided he/she is adult and discreet and of sound mind, and provided they observe all the conditions of reciting that formula. There is no other ritual or function to solemnize the marriage.

If, in spite of all these facilities, they did not marry before sexual intercourse, they have themselves to blame for the consequences.

Question:
According to Sunnis, a child born unlawfully is to be put to death. So are the father and mother of such a child. Is this correct to punish someone for the mother's offence, while

the Qur'an says that 'no one will carry another's load ?'

Answer:
Your information is not correct. The child is not to be punished. In fact, the punishment of the woman is postponed till after the delivery and weaning of the child, to protect him from harm.

By the way, you have used the phrase 'for the mother's offence'. Fornication or adultery is not a one person's offence. It needs a man and woman together to make them fornicators. The man who put that child into the womb of the woman is equally criminal.

The punishment of fornication and adultery differs according to the marital status of the man and woman. It ranges from 100 strokes to the stoning to death.

Question:
According to Sunnis, a dead body may be taken out of the grave if he is buried with some money or gold. But 'Sauti ya Bilal' (Vol.III no. 5) shows that Imam Husain was buried with gold. Is this not bad or was it done purposely?

Answer:
Imam Husain (a.s.) is not buried with gold. The dome above his grave (a photo of which was published in Sauti ya Bilal, Vol. III No. 4) is covered with gold.

Question:
I think the purpose behind the rule of 'Idda' period is to ascertain that the woman does not go with a child in her womb who belongs to her late husband and thus gives the child to the new husband. Can't we use scientific means to find out whether the widow has a child in her womb or not ? For, it is very hard to the widows and worries wives much when their husbands fall ill.

Answer:
Islam is the universal religion, meant for all mankind — scientists and illiterates, so-called civilized ones and bush-dwellers — to be practised everywhere and in all circumstances. It is not a 'scientists' club.'

That is why its rules and regulations have been made by Allah in such a way that a Nomad of Arabia, an Eskimo of Greenland and a pigmy of the Central part of Africa can follow it with equal ease. That is the reason behind adopting lunar calendar, and prescribing the prayer-times by positions of the sun etc. . . .

And that is the reason of prescribing a certain period of 'Idda' (3 months in case of divorce, 4 months 10 days in case of the death of the husband) in which the woman cannot marry another husband.

I do not think any woman, at the approach of the death of her husband, would be worried of not being able of marrying another husband for a short period of 4 months 10 days, instead of grieving for her beloved present husband who is about to depart from this world.

As for the scientific methods : How many women can get themselves scientifically examined? And even if such facilities were available world-wide and cheap enough to allow a begger-woman to take their advantage, there is always the possibility, nay probability, of wrong deduction by the doctors and technicians. You must be aware that in so many cases the experts draw diametrically different conclusions from the same X-ray photo. Therefore, the rule of 'Idda' can never be treated as out of date.

Question:
How do the Shias mourn for a dead person ? Explain for me all that is done for a dead Shia after his death to the ending of the mourning period ?

Answer:
Mourning has two aspects: showing natural grief and uttering words tantamount to complaining against Allah. The first is allowed in Islam; the second is strictly forbidden and Haraam. Even in the fist case, restraint is preferred except in the mourning for the Holy Prophet or his family members.

When a Shia dies, people start reciting the Holy Quran for his/her 'thawab'.

The dead body is washed thrice — by water mixed with a little water squeezed from the leaves of lote-tree, by water in which a little camphor is mixed, and finally by pure water —; then he is given the 'kafan' (shroud); then he is taken to the grave-yard. In East Africa, the people joining the funeral procession recite Kalema on the way. At grave-yard, and sometimes in the mosques, the prayer of 'Meyyit' is held; after prayer a short 'majlis' is recited in which the sufferings of the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bait are narrated. Then the 'Meyyit' is buried.

On second or third day, 'Ziyarat' is held, in which people recite the Holy Qur'an for the 'thawab' of the dead person, and at the end a short 'majlis' is recited. People give whatever they like to the charities and its 'thawab' is intended to be given to the dead person.

Then, after about a month or so, 'Arbain' is held, in which 'majlis' is recited.

After about a year, 'Haul' is held just like 'Arbain'.

Question:
How do the Shia send reward to their dead (Fateha) and when ?

Answer:
The answer is almost fully explained in the previous description. So far as 'when' is concerned, there is no time fixed for it. Apart from the functions mentioned above, most of the Shia Ithnaasheris go to the grave-yard on Thursdays and recite Sura Fateha for their dead relatives.

Question:
The Sunnis say that during the Day of Resurrection, everyone is going to get beautiful ladies; the 40th being his wife in this life. Is this story true ? Suppose a lady got married to more than one man in her life, whose wife will she be on the Resurrection day ?

Answer:
The existence of 'Huur' ('Houri') has been affirmed in the Qur'an in numerous places; and no Muslim (whether Sunni or Shia) can doubt it. If you are afraid of the objections of the Christians, read the recent Light which has already been posted to you. There in the article 'Quiyamat' you will find that, according to Shia belief, everyone who will go to paradise, will find happiness according to his own spiritual perfection. That is quite reasonable; otherwise, if you give a man of little literary knowledge a book of highest literary standard, what will he do with it ? He can never enjoy it, because his standard is not so high. Likewise, people of high spiritual perfection will be happy in company of the angels, and so on. Those who have not attained such height of perfection, will find joy in material things. Hence the provision of milk, honey, fruits, rivers, streams, and 'houri' in the paradise.

This much will be sufficient to show the reason behind the basic idea. Now coming to the number 40, it is not for us to determine who will get what and how much. If God wants to

give someone 40, or 400, or 4,000, it is not our concern.

So far as the believer wife of a believer husband is concerned, she will be with her husband. If she was married to more than one man in her life, she will go to that husband who was more considerate to her and of better behaviour.

Question:
Nowadays, it seems as if Muslims are filled with bad feelings about the landing of Americans on the Moon. What do the Qur'an and Islam say about science and exploration of the solar system ?

Answer:
This question needs detailed answer. You may have to wait for sometime for the full explanation. Meanwhile, to put your mind at ease, I may tell you that it is not the "Muslims" who are filled with 'bad feelings'; it is only the East African Sunnis.

According to the Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet and Imams, it is quite possible to reach heavenly bodies. You may refer to the booklet 'Islam' (page 12) where I have pointed this out. Also see the article 'Space Travel', published in The Light (Appendix 'C').

Question:
A certain person in this area does not think that there is any need for an African to accept an Arabian religion. He counts Islam as Arabic religion. He says that every nation has its own prophets. He says that Sambaa people had some prophets, one of whom was Kighobo of the 10th century who prophesied about the coming of Europeans, the birth of children who will not care about their parents and the ending of the Kilindi dynasty rule in Usambaa — all these have come to truth.

Answer:
This question also needs detailed answer; and I am terribly busy these days. I would like you to read my "Thought For The Week" (copy attached) in which I have touched this subject.

In short, your friend does not know the significance of the term 'Nabi' This word is translated as 'prophet' and 'prophet' in English lanquage conveys the meaning of 'one who prophesies'. But prophesying can be done by so many people: astrologers, crystal-gazers, sooth-savers, all make prophecies. Even the meteorological department has scores'of 'prophets' (in the sense of English language). But prophesying does not make them 'Nabi'. A Nabi is the one who, being the representative of Allah, conveys His message to the people and leads them to the path of God, giving them a code of life based on love and justice. He must have many qualifications, most important of which are 'sinless-ness', appointment by Allah, and showing of miracles after the claim of Nubuwwat, without any practice, medicine or tools.

And nobody has succeeded in substantiating such claim of Nubuwwat after the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.)

So far as the question of 'nation' is concerned, it must be remembered that Islam is not a 'national' religion, like Judaism and Christianity. It is the 'Universal' religion sent by Allah for the whole mankind, through Muhammad, who, of course, was an Arab; but being a human being, he was bound to be born in some place.

It is really surprising that at a time when all thinking people are dreaming of a world government, your friend cherishes the idea of tribal religions. Such thinking cannot take

mankind any further from the present chaotic situation. It was to curb such separatism that God sent Islam as the Religion for 'al-Alameen' (the whole universe).

Question:

He also proves his theory that when any person of any religion prays for anything, he gets it. It shows, according to him, that all religions in the world are true and from God.

Answer:

Well, here is an episode which will throw some light on this question. Once Hadhrat Musa (a.s.) prayed to Allah saying that one apparent cause of the pride of Firaun was the limitless bounties which Allah had bestowed upon him. Allah replied: "Musa, if Firaun has forgotten that he is my creature, how can I forget that I am his Creator ?"

According to the sayings of Ahlul-bait (family members of Holy Prophet), Allah, Who is Rehman and Rahim and Whose love to His creatures knows no bound, sustains everyone, and provides all the needs of all His creatures, in this world, irrespective of the beliefs of the individuals. Therefore, He provides even the atheists (who pray to no one) with their needs.

So, you should understand that those who ask some gods other than Allah, do not get their needs from their supposed deities. They still get them from the only source of life which has power and strength to grant anything to anyone, and that is Allah.

You may ask that, in this condition, what is the need of asking things from Allah, as He would give us our requirements, anyhow. But you should remember that, among other things our prayers to Him and our asking requirements from Him show our gratitude to Him and confirm the fact that we realize from where we are getting our sustenance. Thus, we improve our ethical and spiritual standard by praying to Allah. It is a way of strengthening our relationship with Allah.

Imam Zainul-Abedeen (a.s.), the great-grandson of the Holy Prophet, said in one of his invocations (Duas) : "O Allah, Who gives to those who ask Him, and even to those who do not ask Him."

As I said above, even atheists get their sustenance from Allah, though they believe in no god at all. Therefore, getting their requirements after praying to the supposed deities does not prove that "all religions must be true". Otherwise, such a man would have to admit that even atheism is true. In fact, such a claim as you have narrated is so foolish that it does not deserve any attention. There are religions claiming hundreds of gods and semi-gods; there is Christianity, claiming 3-in-1 god; there is Islam denying more than one God; .... Can all these diametrically different religions be true at one and the same time ? There are religions believing in a Day of Resurrection; there are religions believing, instead, in perpetual transmigration of souls. Can both these views be true and from God ?

Remember, only those people make such claims who are unable to prove the truth of their religious beliefs. So they want to hypnotize people of other faith by claiming the divine origin and truth of 'all religions'; thus making sure that their illogical superficial beliefs also will be treated as divine truth.

Question:

We Muslims are much blamed by non-Muslims for using Holy Book for witch-craft. What really astonishes the non-Muslims is that those sheikhs and sharifus are the leaders of such activities — especially in the Coast area. My question is : How can Islam teach both religious tenets and witch-craft ?

Answer:
There are two aspects of this question which must be explained separately:

First: Is there any harm or evil in healing the people or benefiting them with the help of the name of God ? Certainly not. Hadhrat Isa (a s) used to do so; and the fact is admitted by the Christians and Muslims both. Also, it is written about his 12 disciples that "he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases" (Mathew, 10:1), and he ordered them that: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils". (Mathew, 10:8).

When he removed some evil spirit from some people afflicted by those spirits, his enemies accused him of being in league with demon, saying that "he hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan ?" (Mark, 3:22-23).

So you will see that healing with the name of Allah is not evil; and it is not 'witch-craft'. If the Christians have lost that power, it is because they are not the followers of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, they would have been able to "say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and thou cast into the sea" and it would have been done (Mathew, 21:2).

Second: What is the difference between healing with the help of God and the witch-craft ? It is the same difference which exists between a medicine and a poison. The poison brings harm to body, while the medicine removes the harmful effects. Therefore, if any Sheikh tries to benefit someone with the name of God, or the ayat of the Qur'an, it is like curing someone of his sickness by the medicine, and therefore, should not be ridiculed. On the other hand, if he tries to bring harm to someone, or uses methods other than the name of Allah or ayat of Qur'an, it is witch-craft, and it may be likened to poisoning someone.

But this does not mean that Allah has taught the witch-craft as you have asked in your question.

But, remember that, according to true Islamic belief (i.e., of Shia faith) a man is obliged to strive to the utmost limit of his capacity to improve his condition and then he should pray to Allah to bless his efforts with success. It is no use to sit idle and pray to Allah to send him his food. He must try hard to earn his living, and side by side should pray to Allah to give 'baraka' in his earnings. Likewise, if a man is sick, he should go to the doctor and use the medicine prescribed by him faithfully following all his instructions, and side by side should pray to Allah to give him back his health. This praying is more important than hanging some 'hirizi' in the neck or binding it on the arm.

Unfortunately many Sunni Sheikhs have made this 'hirizi' writing a source of their income, bullying people to procure goats, or cock of such a colour, or so many yards of a cloth of such a colour, or so many shillings; certainly they have crossed the limit of religion, and deserve condemnation as exploiters and 'mirija'. They have disgraced the name of Islam.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK (ISLAM : A UNIVERSAL RELIGION)

"And We did not send thee (Muhammad) but for the whole mankind". (Quran, 34:28).

Look at the major religions of the world minutely and you will find that it is only Islam which claimed from the beginning to be the religion for the whole mankind.

God sent, before Muhammad, thousands of prophets and apostles to different places and nations to guide their people to the right path. It should be mentioned here that the word 'prophet', when used by Muslims, does not mean 'one who foretells the events'. Foretelling the events is not a very important function of a 'prophet'. A prophet, according to Islam, is sent by God to call people to His path. He is the link between Allah and His creatures; and by following his foot-prints the followers can be sure of receiving the glory of God.

Anyhow, when as a result of the efforts of these prophets, mankind reached the stage of maturity, the Holy Prophet of Islam was sent by God for the whole mankind. He reaffirmed, revived, consolidated and perfected the teachings of the earlier prophets (which by passage of time had become distorted and disfigured).

Muhammad came in the world, announcing that, "I have been sent to all people — red and black and yellow." Among his early followers were people from Ethiopia, Iran, Rome and India.

According to the Qur'an, Allah is not a tribal god but the 'Lord of Universe'; Qur'an is the 'Declaration for the universe'; and the Holy Prophet is 'The Mercy for the universe'

By sending his messengers to Asia Minor, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Umman and many other places, calling those people to come within the fold of Islam, Muhammad left an undeniable proof that his was the universal religion, unfettered with shackles of tribe, region, colour or race.

23rd January, 1970

Dear Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

Mr. Mwangamilo has written me in December, 1969 concerning the "Answers to my Questions" which have been sent to my home address (Kwemkole, Kizara-Korogwe).

I wrote to my brother, there, about the matter so that he may send the answers here.

Up to this time I have neither received any reply from my brother concerning this, nor did I receive the answers as I hoped, because the postman at Kizara was directing all letters of mine to this centre.

Have they returned the letter there ? If so, please send the letter here. If not help me in getting the answers.

May Allah help you all in all matters.

Yours in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Muhammad Kiondo.

7th February, 1970

Dear Sir,

I enclose the passage you have asked for in your letter of 30/1/70.

Concerning the letter No. BMM/40/201/69, the reply of which you are waiting for, I think is the letter signed by Mr. Mwangamilo which does not bear any date, This letter tells me that, the answers to my questions of early March, 1969 have been sent to me on my home address — Kwemkole Village, Kizara Upper Primary School, P.O. Korogwe. If at all you mean such a letter, up to this time, I have not received the answers although I have written to my brother at Kwemkole concerning this. Please help me in this matter.

May Allah be with you all.

Your brother in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Muhammad Kiondo.

9th February, 1970

Dear Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

This is to inform you that I have received the answers to my questions yesterday 8/2/70.

Thanks for troubling yourself in trying to show me where the truth is. Now it is clear to me that I am lost and I should find the right path.

It has taken me a long time to realize that I am in a wrong way. I thank Allah for showing me the right way by means of your services. May He save others also.

I kindly ask your service to give me more guidance so as to get more knowledge about my new and true faith.

Question: (a) Should I have a particular "Baptism" and who shall baptize me while all here are Sunnis ? (b) Islam encourages much congregational prayers. Will I be allowed to pray with Sunnis and in Sunni style ? (c) Much of my religious knowledge is Sunnic. How can I get much Shia knowledge. — Please give me a list of Religious books used by Shias, from the simplest to the hardest so that I can buy them, and study them if I get a teacher to teach me. (d) How can I help in the spread of Shiaism in Tanzania, East Africa, Africa or in

the whole world ?

May Allah bless your holy works, and reward you with heavenly rewards.

Your brother in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Mohamed Kiondo.

21st February, 1970.

Dear Dhikiri Omari Moh'd Kiondo,

I was very glad to receive your letter dated 7th instant. I got your previous letter after I sent my letter on 30/1/70. I sent the copy of the replies to you per Registered Post, and from your latest letter dated 9th February, I gather that you have got that letter.

I welcome you most gladly to the Shia Ithna-asheri faith of Islam. As regards your questions, please see the following :-

(1) There is no baptism in Islam. You are already a Muslim and if you believe in the tenets of Shia'ism, you are a Shia without any need of any rite. But for the purpose of our own record, I would request you to fill up the enclosed declaration form and send it to us.

(2) For the time being you may pray with the Sunnis. We will discuss it in detail when we meet, fnsha-Allah.

(3) So far as the knowledge of Shia faith is concerned, I would be glad to receive you in Dar es Salaam. Please let me know whether you can get transfer to Dares Salaam. If it is possible, then you can easily get necessary religious training in our Night Class here. But if it is not possible, then we will have to make some other plan for you. Meanwhile, I am collecting some good books for you and will send them within a week by surface mail.

(4) You have asked: "How can I help? 'n the spread of Shia'ism in Tanzania, East Africa, Africa, or in the whole world ?"

Well, people like you can do a lot because you have access to the young minds and you can influence their way of thinking even indirectly. First of all, you should yourself acquire the necessary knowledge. Secondly, you should make yourself a good model of Ithna-asheri faith, so that people are attracted first to you and then, through you, to your faith. That was the way of Tabligh of Holy Prophet and our Imams. Thirdly, you should have friendly discussions and discourses with your friends and thus help in removing the prejudice and ignorance which is prevalent in this part of the world regarding our faith.

Yours in Iman,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

3rd March, 1970

Dear Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

Thank you for accepting me in the Shia Ithna-asheri faith of Islam. Concerning the transfer to Dar es Salaam as you have asked me, is very difficult as my employer is Lushoto District Council which has no connection with Dar es Salaam.

Let me buy some books of Shia faith at present. After having completed my National Service duty, I will arrange with you to send me a young teacher to teach me religion. I will be able to pay that teacher a little sum of money monthly.

My home address may change later to the one in the form, because I am building a house there, and planning to have a permanent station there.

May Allah allow us to meet and may He spread Islam all over the globe as well.

Yours in Islam (Shiaism),

Dhikiri O. Mohamed Kiondo.

9th April, 1970.

Dear Dhikiri,

I was in Congo for some time and came back on 28th March, 1970.

The books (which I promised you) could not be sent because of my absence. Today I have despatched the following books for your perusal :-

Book of Salaat (Illustrated).

Mubahela.

Islam the Religion with God.

Co-existence of Shia and Hanafi Muslims.

Muhammad the Man.

Saheefa-e-Kamelah.

Discourses on Tauheed.

Muhammad the Legislator.

Teachings of Islam (Unity of God).

God of Muhammad (S).

Bhooli Huwi Baten.

Book of Islamic Part 1-11.

Husain (a.s.) The Prince of Martrys and the Saviour of Humanity.

The Boundry Line between the Shias and the Sunnis.

Tragedy of Hussain.

The Sacrifice at Karbala, its Causes and results

Also, I Would like you to wite a short article on “Why I became a Shia?” in English or Kiswahili; and if possible send us your passport size photograph.

Please treat it as urgent. Thanking you

Your sincerely

S.S. Akhtar Rizvi

16th April 1970

Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

Assalamo Alaikum, Maulana,

Thank you very much for the books you have sent me. I have received all 27 books.

I also thank the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania for taking so much trouble for my Islamic studies.

In order to take benefit from the books, I have concluded as follows :

(a) Because Shiaism is new to me, I must spend much time in studying it so that I may have as much knowledge as possible about it — therefore, I kindly ask you to make a syllabus equivalent to Std. XII level, covering Qur'an and Sheriat.

(b) Because I have a little knowledge in Arabic handwriting, I kindly ask you, to send lesson of "Arabic language" equivalent to English for Std. I, if possible.

(c) I kindly ask you to help me in getting the best Quranic commentary ever translated into English. Let me know its price.

I am sending you the article, my picture and my questions to be answered by you, so that I may have good knowledge of Islam. (See Appendix 'D').

I am very well here by mercy of Allah. Much greetings to you and your family from my wife.

May Allah let us meet one day.

Your Brother in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Mohamed Kiondo

20th June, 1970

Dear Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

How are you Maulana,

The only purpose of this letter is to inform you that I will be out for five months.

I am going for National Service at Oljoro, Arusha. I will be back in November, 1970 if Allah wills. But before I am back — I will kindly ask you to find for me a suitable teacher willing to teach me both Arabic language and Nahow at this place. I am ready to pay him a little sum of about 100/- a month according to what I can afford.

I prefer a single person; feeding and clothing will be provided by me.

Please help me in this matter.

Insha-allah Allah will let us meet one day and bless our good aims.

Yours in Islamic faith

Dhikiri O. Mohamed Kiondo.

26th July, 1970.

Dear Dhikiri,

Thank you for your letter, dated 20th June, informing me that you are going to Oljoro, Arusha, for National Service. I do not know how far this place is from Arusha; but if it is near Arusha, I may be able to see you sometime in August.

You asked about best Tafseer of the Qur'an in English. There is a very detailed Tafseer in English. In fact, its only defect is that it is too detailed. But I think you will get benefit from it. Its price is Shs. 100/-. If you want it, I may send it to you on the address you propose.

About Arabic Language : I am looking out for such a Muallim as you want. I will send to you some books when you are free from National Service.

Now about your questions :-

Question:
How far is a Muslim allowed to entertain himself ? Is he allowed to entertain himself with music ?

Answer:
A Muslim is not allowed to entertain himself or herself with dance, music, gambling or drinking.

Question:
What is your opinion about the Christian theory of salvation through the crucifixion (death) of Jesus ? Is it justice to kill someone for another's salvation ?

Answer:
It is absolute non-sense. You have answered this question when you said: "Is it justice to kill someone for another's salvation ?'.'

Question:
Is the Christian thought about the cause of the death correct ? That man dies because of the disobedience of our father 'Adam' and 'Eve' ?

Answer:
This also is a myth. Nobody in his right sense would think like it seriously. It is a supposition to support the above mentioned theory of salvation.

Question:
Did our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) deliver his message to the Jinnis ? If the answer is yes, how did he do this, while the Jinnis are not usually seen by man ? And how is Islam maintained among the Jinnis now ?

Answer:
Yes, our Holy Prophet preached among the Jinns, and this fact is clearly described in the Sura 'Al-Jinn' in the 29th Juzw. The Jinns are not seen by men, as you have said, usually. But they may make themselves visible if they want. And the power of the eyes of the Holy Prophet was such that he could, and did, see the angels (who also are not seen usually by men); therefore, it is not a serious problem.

As about the maintenance of Islam among them now, it is described in our books, that they have their own scholars and preachers, as the human beings do. And it has been hinted in many traditions of our Imams that the Jinni Muslims were not misled by those who contrived to mislead the mankind; they are on right path.

Question:
May I know the Dua and manner of slaughtering the following animals :

Chicken; goat; cow; camel; wild animals; an animal for Aquiqua; an animal for slaying Festival, i.e. Idd-ul-Hajj.

Answer:
Chicken, cow, goat and animals like these are slaughtered by knife. Camel is first pierced

in the neck by spear, and then slaughtered by knife.

In all slaughterings, except Aquiqua and Sacrifice of Idd-ul-Hajj the only dua which is wajib is 'Bismillah'.

In Aquiqua and sacrifice, as mentioned above, it is necessary to have the 'niyyet' (intention) that you are slaughtering the animal for that particular purpose Qurbatan Ilallah (i.e., in obedience to the command of Allah).

Other necessary conditions for the slaughter of any animal are as follows:-

1. The person who slaughters must be a Muslim.
2. The knife must be of iron or steel.
3. At the time of slaughtering, the face, hands, feet and stomach of the animal must be towards Quibla. Also, the person slaughtering that animal must be facing towards Quibla.
4. Before begining the slaughter, when the knife is put on the animal's throat, the person must say 'Bismillah' with intention of slaughtering it.
5. The animal should move its body or limbs after slaughter before dying. Also it is necessary that as much blood should come out of its body as normally comes out from such animals.

Aquiqua: Before slaying the animal for Aquiqua, this Dua is Sunnat :

Bismillahi wa billahi Allahumma hadhihi Aqiqatun an (name of the child and his father) Lahmuha bi lahmihi wa damuha bi damihi wa adhmuha bi adhmihi wa sh'aruha bi sh'arihi wa jilduha bi jildihi Alla-hummaj'alha waqa-an li (name of child and his father).

If the child is a daughter, then after taking her name first time, the remaining Du'a will be recited as follows :-

Lahmuha bi lahmiha wa damuha bi damiha wa adhmuha bi adhmiha wa sh'aruha bish'ariha wa jilduha bi jildiha Allahummaj-alha waqa-an li (name of child and her father).

Another Du'a :

Ya qaume' Inni bari-un mimma tushrikuun Inni wajjahtu wajhiya lilladhi fataras-samaawaati wal ardha hanifam muslimanw wa ma ana minal mushrikiin Inna Swlaati wa nusuki wa mahyaya wa mamaati lillahi Rabbil-Aalamiina La sharika lahu wa bi dhaalika umirtu wa ana minal muslimiin Allahumma minka wa laka Bismillahi wallahu Akbar.

After slaughtering, say:

Allahumma Swalli ala Muhammadinw wa Aali Muhammad wa Taqabbal min (name of child and his/her father).

Sacrifice at Eid-ul-Hajj time: Before killing the animal, this Dua is Sunnat:

Wajjahtu wajhiya lilladhi fatarassamaawaati wal ardha hanifam muslimanw wa ma ana minal mushrikiin Inna swalaati wa nusuki wa mahyaya wa mamaati lillahi Rabbil-Aalamiina La sharika lahu wa bi dhaalika umirtu wa ana minal muslimiin Allahumma minka wa laka Bismillahi wallahu Akbar.

After slaughtering, say:
Allahumma Taqabbal minni.

Hunting wild animals: If a wild animal whose meat is Halal, is killed by hunting, it will be Halal on the following conditions :-

1. The weapon must be sharp (like spear or arrow) which pierces the body by its sharp

edge. Also, the bullets of a gun are allowed. But small gun like air-gun is not allowed.

2. The Person who uses that weapon must use it with intention of killing that animal. If, for example, an animal is killed by his bullet accidentally, its meat will not be Halal.
3. The said person must be a Muslim.
4. At the time of using that weapon, he/she must say 'Bismillah'
5. The animal, at the arrival of the hunter, must be dead by that weapon (or so near to death that slaying it in normal way is not possible). If at the arrival of the hunter it is alive, and there is enough time to slay it in normal way, it must be slaughtered accordingly; otherwise, its meat will be Haram.

Yours sincerely,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

4th November, 1970.

Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

How are you Maulana ! ! !

How is your family and the Mission staff there ?

I promised to write to you on the day we met in Arusha, but the situation did not allow me.

We were not allowed to go out of the camp, nor were there stamps in our shop for some reasons. The first reason also has hindered me from the prayer practice you arranged for me in Arusha.

I hope to leave this wonderful place on or before 24th November. Therefore, I think it would be better if you do not send me anything by this address.

I will send you my address after my arrival at home. It may be that I am transferred from Sunga.

Much greetings to your family and to the Bilal Muslim Mission staff.

May Allah accept our Taubas in this Holy Month of Ramadhan — Amin.

Your son in Islam,

Dhikiri O. Mohamed Kiondo.

3rd December, 1970.

Dear Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi,

How are you Maulana ? How has it been, the Idd-el-Fitr ?

I am very well, by the blessings of Allah; and my family at Kwe-mkole in Korogwe District is all well.

I am glad to inform you that I will still be in this place using the same address.

I hope, after few days, I will send you Shs. 15/- for the registration and first payment of the fees for the Correspondence Course.

May Allah help us.

Your son

11th December, 1970.

My Dear Dhikiri,

Thank you for your letter of 3rd December, 1970.

You will be enrolled as a student of Islamic Correspondence Course, free of charge.

The application form is enclosed, which please return duly filled.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

My Dear Dhikiri,

Here are the answers to your questions

Question:
Have the Scientists recognised the need of a Planner and a Designer ?

Answer:
You should find its answer in Unit 2 (God of Islam). Apart from other chapters, the 13th and 14th chapters specially deal with this question.

Question:
How Pascal used Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib's (A.S.) idea ?

Answer:
I am publishing an article on it in June issue of "Light". (Now see 'Need of Religion', published by this Mission).

Question:
How have the other sects of Islam failed to fulfil the necessary qualities of a Religion ?

Answer:
All right. Look into chapter 5 of 'Need of Religion' and start comparing :-

A) Ashaira (i.e., Sunnis) do not accept that reason or intellect has any place in religion. In fact, they do not accept any relation between a cause and its effect. And unless the relationship of cause and effect is accepted, nothing can be proved by any argument.

B) By the same reasoning, the teaching of Sunni'ism neglects 'mind' and thus prevents the development of a human being as a "whole".

C) The belief in Pre-destination is enough to show how Sunni'ism fails this test.

Question:
How do the Qadariyyas share with God in Legislating the Shariat ?

Answer:
Qadariyyas believe that human beings are 100% independent of Allah in their actions, and Allah has no control over their deeds. They are counted as 'Mushrik' because, according to that belief, they treated themselves as equal to and independent of Allah in their actions.

I am afraid that the sentence in 'God of Islam' concerning this topic is not very clear. I will make it more clear in the next edition.

Question:
What were the ten intellects that the ancient Greek philosophers believed to have created the Universe ?

Answer:
This thing has no existence; it was a creation of the mental luxury of Greek philosophers. They said that the Creator created the first intellect; this first intellect created the second intellect and first sky; the second intellect, in its turn, created the third intellect and the second sky; and likewise, the ninth intellect created the tenth intellect and ninth sky. The tenth intellect created this Earth. According to them, the Creator, after creating the first intellect, is powerless to do any other work.

Question:
How can the name Rahim be used for others besides Allah

Answer:
The word 'Rahim' literally means 'Merciful'. In Arabic language it was being used for merciful persons. And it continued to be used in that way. In the Qur'an this adjective has been used for our beloved Prophet also. But 'Rahman' was not used before Islam and in the Islamic terminology the difference in the meaning and usage of the two names was prescribed, as I have mentioned in the book, 'God of Islam'.

Question:
How can the belief in one God create brotherhood ?

Answer:
As children of one father have a feeling of brotherhood because all are the off-springs of one father, likewise, the creatures of One God are bound to have brotherly feelings towards each other because they are the creation of One Creator.

Question:
Suppose a Muslim eats something forbidden in his religion — will he need a special purification? What is it?

Answer:
There are no special purification rites. The method of cleansing by water, as described in 'Elements of Islamic Studies' applies here also.

But one must ask forgiveness of Allah for disobeying His Sheriat.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

Question:
Satan was one of the Angels. Angels were not given the power of doing things according to their free will, power and intention. How did Satan come to disobey Allah while he was bound to Allah's commandments and guidance?

Answer:
Satan was not from the angels. Qur'an repeatedly says that he is from Jinns. Jinns, like human beings, have been given free will and they are expected, like human beings, to obey, the commands of Allah by their free will and power.

Question:
According to our belief (Shia), a prophet is sinless. Why should we pray for our Holy Prophet of Islam during prayers and other times, when we believe that he was Masum?

Answer:
We pray for our Holy Prophet in obedience to the command of Allah: -

The benefit of 'Salawat' returns to us as the Holy Prophet has said: 'Whoever among you sends one Salawat to me, I pray for him 10 times."

The Mercy and Grace of Allah is limitless. Our Holy Prophet was already bestowed with Grace of Allah more than any one else. But it does not mean that the Grace has reached its limit: it has no limit. Therefore, we pray for him so that Allah may bestow him with His ever-new Graces and Mercies.

Moreover, we praise and thank Allah and pray before him, though He has no need of our prayers, thanks and praises. But by doing so, we express and show our relation and gratitude to Him. Likewise, the Holy Prophet has no need of our 'Salawat'; but by ordering us to recite 'Salawat' Allah wants us to express our relation with, and gratitude to, the Holy Prophet.

Question:
How is it that there are differences in praying while the prayer was taught by our Holy Prophet himself?

Answer: I am sending you "Light" Vol. I No.1. You read it and will find out how the system of prayer was changed.

Question:
What support do the Sunnis have, that Music is allowed provided that it is not "Kufur"?

Answer:
I do not know but it seems that this rule was established to justify the music parties of the kings of Bani Ummaya and Bani Abbas

Sincerely yours

S.S Akhtar Rizvi

6th September 1971

Dear Maulana S.S Akhtar Rizvi

Assalam Alaykum

Thank you for your letter of 19th August, 1971. I am happy that I am warmly welcomed there.

My visit to Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania will be postponed because there will be no holiday this year for most of the schools in Tanzania.

With best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

Dhikiri O. Mohamed Kiondo.

30th September, 1971.

My Dear Dhikiri,

Alaikumussalaam !

I got your letter dated 6th September; but could not reply it soon because of some other engagements.

I am sorry that you will not be able to come to Dares Salaam. But I would be glad if you come here any time you are free — even for two or three days.

Wish best wishes.

Sincerey yours,

S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

Dear Dhikiri,

Here are the answers to your questions :-

Question:
Did the Holy Prophet pay Mahr for his first wife, Hadhrat Khadija ? How much ?

Answer:
There are various traditions about the 'Mahr' of Hadhrat Khadija : 500 Dirhams or 400 Mithqual gold or 20 camels.

Question:
How was the "Black Stone" brought to Hazrat Ismail ? How does it look like ? What is inside it ? What is the significance of the stone ?

Answer:
The Black Stone was brought to earth by Hadhrat Adam. It is a stone and nothing is inside it. I am attaching its photo, and you will see that now it is covered on the rims by silver. According to Islamic traditions, in the beginning of the creation, Allah asked all the souls "Am I not your Lord ?" And all the souls replied "Yes, surely". Then Allah kept these confessions of beliefs in that stone. Now, the pilgrims recite a Dua in which they affirm that they have kept their promise and have maintained the belief that Allah is their Lord. According to Hadith, this stone will be a witness for those who go to the pilgrimage with

true faith.

Question:

The ancestors of the Holy Prophet were the worshippers of one God (Allah), according to our faith. How is it that they did not discourage the idol worshipping ?

Answer:

See Unit 4 page 3, where you will find that some of the prophets were sent to one man only. Also, in page 9 of that Unit you will find that the ancestors of the Holy Prophet were successors of the prophets, but not prophets themselves This much about their spiritual position. Coming to the worldly side, we know that they were not strong enough to successfully oppose idol-worship. The tribe of Quraish during the period of their disintegration and weakness had acquired all the bad habits and customs of other Arabian tribes. When they were gathered by Qusaiy, they had been idol-worshippers for many hundred years. It needed a man of the spiritual status of our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) to succeed against them and eradicate idol-worship; no other man could accomplish this task. As they realized that their voices against idols would not be heard, they remained silent, forbidding only those of whom they were sure that they would listen to them.

Question:

The uncle of the Holy Prophet, Abu Talib, seemed to accept Islam, but not really a Muslim, why?

Answer:

Who said that Abu Talib was not really a Muslim? I have described at length that he kept the tribe of Quraish in suspense and doubt about his faith. But it does not mean that he was not Mumin. To keep one's faith secret where the interest of religion depends upon that secrecy is very much appreciated in the Qur'an. Allah praises a family member of Firaun who believed in Hadhrat Musa — secretly, and thus used his influence and position to benefit Hadhrat Musa. Commending it, Allah says :

"And said a man who was a believer, from among the people of Pharaoh, who used to conceal his faith ... ." (Qur'an, 40:28).

The same was the position of Hadhrat Abu Talib.

Question:

Some Sunni sheikhs say that when Abu Talib died, the Holy Prophet spread his saliva all over his body so that he may not be put into hell. Is this story correct ?

Answer:

It is all a pack of lies; there is no trace of such thing even in Sunnis' books.

Question:

What was the reason behind Usama's expedition ? Because it is as if the Holy Prophet would encourage Muslims to take a vengeance.

Answer:

Well, when enemy is bent upon destroying you, you have to fight him. As the Ghassanide Chief with the encouragement of the Roman emperor, wanted to crush Islam, it was necessary to weaken him to protect the Muslims and Islam. So much about your question of vengeance.

Now, I better mention one thing which can easily be inferred from this event. The Holy Prophet was aware that his death was very near; also he understood very well that certain people were not happy with the announcement of Ghadeer Khum. It seems that he wanted to send all those people away from Madina, so that when his death came, these people would not be in Madina to make trouble. We find that all immigrants, including Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, etc. etc. were strictly ordered to join the army under Usama. Ali was told to remain in Madina, while others were cursed if they delayed in joining Usama and all of them delayed.

This seems to be the real "reason" behind Usama's expedition.

Question:
The Holy Prophet is recorded to have said: Treat yourself because there is no sickness without treatment. What sort of treatments should a Muslim use ?

Answer:
Any medicine which does not contain any Haram thing.

Question:
Are African medicines not allowed in Islam ?

Answer:
I do not understand what you mean by "African medicines". If you mean leaves and roots of trees etc., then it is all right if it cures the sickness.

Question:
Suppose the disease is new and the physician uses "bao" or "Ramli" so that he may know the kind of disease, will it be Haram ?

Answer:
These things are not allowed.

Question:
Is it true that in Shia Ithna-asheria, only Seyids are allowed to lead in congregational prayer ?

Answer:
No. — Any Shia !thna-asheri who fulfils the conditions may lead in the prayers.

Question:
Can an ordinary person become Seyid ? How ?

Answer:
The word "Seyyid" when used in Persia, India, Pakistan and Africa, means the descendent of the Holy Prophet. Now, you will realize that your question has no meaning. If a person is not from a family he cannot become a member of that family. But it does not mean that a person who is not Seyyid, is prohibited from any work or office of religion. He can rise to the highest possible status; for example he may become a Mujtahid. In fact, hundreds of our great living Mujtahids are non-Seyyids.

Question:
The Jinns and men have the same obligation towards Allah. Why is that Jinns are kept in Ghaib ?

Answer:
Jinns are invisible to us only. They are not invisible among themselves. They have their life and death; their family and society; their religion and belief.

For example if a blind animal does not see human beings, it does not mean that human beings feel any trouble or discomfort. Likewise, if our eyes are not seeing the Jinns, it does not disturb the Jinns at all.

Question:
Can Ghaib be explored ?

Answer:
Only when you attain spiritual perfection.

Question:
Most Arabic names start with either "Al" or "El" (a) what is the difference of the two words (b) How are they used in the Arabic language ?

Answer:
"Al" or "El" is the Arabic ‘Alif and 'Lam'. There is no difference in Arabic. Some Europeans write is as "Al" which is the correct pronunciation; others write it as "El".

’Al’ conveys in Arabic the following shades of meaning: (1) Each and every individual of the thing mentioned, taken separately; (2) all the individuals of the thing mentioned, taken jointly; (3) the species of the thing mentioned taken as an abstract idea. Thus it may be translated by "Each and every", "all" and "the"

Question:
Do all things have souls ?

Answer:
Not all things.

Question:
If not, why is it said that when you steal, all things around there, will provide evidence against you before God ?

Answer:
Well, why are you astonished? Even today soulless things give evidence for or against a man in the courts. Finger-prints, tapes, clothes, shoes, things belonging to a thief which are found near the place of theft, these and scores of such things give evidence in courts. So what is strange if the surrounding things were to provide evidence against a sinner on the Day of Judgment ?

31st August 1972

My Dear Dhikiri,

Here are the answers to your questions :—

Question:
Suppose I have something to give for Zakat-Fitr, but I know if I do that I will have nothing to support myself with — what should I do ?

Answer:
Read p. 13 of "The Fasting In Islam" to find out the conditions when Zakat-ul-Fitra is Wajib. If you fulfill those conditions, you will have to pay that Zakat, even if it means taking loan for the time being; but if it is not Wajib upon you, then you are free.

Question:
What does it mean by "a poor of his faith" does it mean a Muslim of any Madhheb or he must be a Shia ithna-asheri?

Answer:
It means "poor Shia Ithna-asheri".

Question:
Why does the time-table you sent me does not show time for 'Asr and Isha prayers ?

Answer:
In Shia Sheriat, the time of Asr starts just after finishing the prayer of Dhohr; and that of Isha just after finishing the Maghrib. (See Lesson 26 of Elements of Islamic Studies for details). Therefore, it was not necessary to mention the times of those two prayers.

Question:
By cleansing with leaves — I mean, why are we Muslims not allowed to clean ourselves with leaves — let us say when we have attended the call of nature instead of using stones, clothes and such others ?

Answer:
You may use clean leaves.

Question:
Are ladies in Haidh and Nifas allowed to fast ?

Answer:
No. See page 5 of Fasting in Islam.

Question:
Please Maulana, may I know the number of days each month of Islamic Calendar is supposed to have ?

Answer:
It is either 29 or 30, depending upon the visibility of the moon.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely, S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

15th February, 1974

My Dear Dhikiri,

Here are the answers to your questions :—

Question:
Why does not the Holy Qur'an give strong emphasis to support father-in-law and mother-in-law ? Because a married woman will never be able to support her father and mother if her husband does not like it.

Answer:
Woman, married or unmarried, is never expected to support any body. She is to be supported by her father or her husband.

Question:
I have seen in Unit 21 that female children are better than male ones, because they even enter the Paradise easily. Why do people, even the Muslims, want and long for male children ?

Answer:
The responsibilities of women are not as easy as you think. So far as longing for male children is concerned, it must be remembered that giving a son or a daughter is entirely in the hands of Allah, and a Muslim must be happy with whatever Allah has given him.

Question:
Getting education compels young men to remain unmarried for a long time, even when their sexual urge does not allow them to remain so. What advice can you give our Muslim young men concerning this problem?

Answer:
There is no other way. If a man controls himself, and is in danger of falling in Haram, then it is Wajib upon him to get married at once. If he neglects this Wajib, for whatever reason, then he should not blame the Sheriat.

Question:
My mother died an hour after my birth; my aunt took care of me. This woman has no son. What are my duties towards her ?

Answer:
Did she give you her milk from her breast ? At least for one day and night ? If so, then she is your foster-mother. You cannot marry her daughters, nor the daughters of those foster-sisters. In short, think of her as mother, and all the rules regarding mother and children of mother will apply in her case also.

Question:
Why doesn't Islam allow people to use their mothers' surnames, like Juma bin Zainab, instead of Juma bin Hamisi ? I think using mother's name gives more honour to mother; also it is clear that mother is surely the parent of the child, while it is not so sure in case of father.

Answer:
There is no such thing as 'surname' in Islam. And the Islamic society is the Paternal society, not the maternal one. Moreover ,in a Islamic society there can never be so many bastards as to necessitate the use of mothers' names instead of fathers. Also, in a Islamic

society, using the name of mother, instead of father, indicates that the child is not a legitimate one (and the reason is somewhat similar to that which you have mentioned). So, the use of mother's name is not an honour, but a disgrace for the mother.

Question:
Do we Muslims believe that Allah had sent ladies as prophets, as the Christians believe in Deborah as a prophetess (Judges, 4:4) and Ruth (Ruth) ?

Answer:
No. And the Christians do not believe as you think. According to Christianity, Judaism (and Sunni'ism), the woman is the root-cause of all the troubles and sufferings of mankind, and is debarred from becoming even a priest, let alone Prophethood. You think that anyone who foretells an event, is a prophet. In Islam it is not so. Read carefully Unit 4 of ICC.

With best wishes,

Yours Lovingly,
S. S. Akhtar Rizvi.

(Appendix 'A') ORIGIN OF SHI'ISM

A Shia student from Mombasa is writing a thesis for H.S.C. examination and needs information about the origin of Shi'ism. The fact is the Shia sect is the follower of the original Islam; and, therefore, the origin of Shi'ism is the same as that of Islam.

The main difference between Sunni and Shia sects is about the successorship of the Holy Prophet. The Sunnis believe that Hazrat Abu Bakr was the first caliph; the Shias believe that Hazrat Ali was the first Imam. When we see the declarations of the Holy Prophet, as recorded in the books of Tafseer, Traditions, Biographies and Histories, by the Sunni scholars themselves, it becomes clear that it was the Holy Prophet of Islam who was the originator of Shi'ism.

The first open declaration of the Prophethood was the very occasion when the first open declaration of the Khilafat of Hazrat Ali was made,

Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal, in his Musnad (one of the Sihah Sitta), and Imam Tha'labi, in his Tafseer Ma'alim-ut-tanzeel (Bombay, p. 663) have recorded the event a summary of which is given here :-

"When the ayat of the Qur'an *'Warn thy near relatives'* was revealed, the Prophet gathered 30 people from his clan; they feasted; and then the prophet declared his Prophethood and asked: "Who among you will be responsible for my promises and debts and will be my caliph and will be with me in Paradise ?" Nobody came forward except Ali who said "I"; the Prophet said "Yes, You."

In the famous book of the traditions 'Kanzul-ummal' (Vol. VI, p. 397) the words of the Holy Prophet are recorded as follows :-

"The Prophet told his family "I have brought to you good of this world and that of life hereafter. And my Lord has commanded me to call you to it. Who among you will help me in this work of mine on the condition that he would be my brother, my successor and my caliph ?"

Ali said, "I, O Prophet of Allah, wil! be your helper in it". Then the Prophet caught his shoulder and said: "Verily, he is my brother, my successor and my caliph among you. Listen to him and obey him." The group stood up laughing and telling Abu Talib (Father of Ali) that Muhammad had ordered him to listen to his son and obey him."

The words "Wasi'i wa Khalifati" (My successor and my caliph) have been recorded also in "Tareekh" of Tabari (Laden, Germany, 1879, page 1,173) and in Sirat of Ibn- Is-haque.

It is interesting to note that in the Cairo edition of Tareekh-e-Tabari (1939), which claims to be checked with the Laden edition, the important words (My successor and my caliph) have been changed to 'Kadha wa kadha' (so and so)! How sad it is to see the academic world sacrificing its honesty on the altar of political expediency!

This was in the beginning. In the last months of his life, the Prophet declared Ali to be his successor and Master of the Muslims, in Khum. The event is recorded in countless Sunni Books. At present I would like to refer to such Sunni authorities as Kanz-ul-ummal (Vol. VI, p .397, 399) and Al-Khasais (by Imam Nasai) p.48. They have conceeded that the Prophet conferred the Khilafat, in Khum, upon Ali. The following words of the Prophet are most important:

"I am leaving behind, among you, two most precious things....................1) the Book of

Allah...........and 2) my descendants who are my family members. They will not be separated from each other until they come to me near Kauther (in Quiyamat). Verily, AIlah is my Master and I am the master of every believer. (Then he took the hands of Ali and said) Everyone whose Master am I, Ali is his Master."

These two traditions are referred to as the traditions of Two precious things' and of 'Vilayat' (Mastership). They are jointly and severally narrated by hundreds of traditionalist.

Nawwab Siddique Hassan Khan of Bhopal, says :

"Hakim Abu Said says that the traditions of Two precious things' and of 'Whose Master am I, Ali is his Master' are 'Mutawatir' (i.e. narrated by so many people that no doubt can be entertained about their authenticity), because a great number of the companions of the Prophet have narrated them. So much so that Muhammad bin Jarir has written these two traditions by 75 different chains". (Manhaj-u!-wusul, p. 13).

Al-Amini, the Shia author, has classified the narrators of this tradition and has found that among them are 120 (one hundred twenty) Companions of the Prophet, 84 Tabein (their deciples). The number of famous traditionalists who have narrated it reaches up to 360. 26 special books have been compiled by Shia and Sunni scholars on this tradition only.

When we see that between these two events, the Prophet repeatedly referred to the followers of Ali as Shia, we come to the conclusion that not only the faith of Shi'ism, but the name also was originated by the Prophet himself.

Allama Ibn Hajar Makki, in his book As Sawai-qul-Muhriqua, and Ibn Athir in his book Nihaya, say that Prophet said : "O Ali, verily thou wilt come before Allah, thou and thy Shias, happily and God will be happy with you."

As-Suyuti says in his Tafseer 'Ad-Dur-rul-manthur': "The Prophet said, pointing towards Ali: 'He and his Shias are those who will be successful in Quiyamat."

(Appendix 'B') SECTS OF ISLAM

There is no difference of opinion amongst Muslim sects that the 'religion' of God is Islam; that the only way to know Islam is through the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet; that the Book of God is what is known as Qur'an, without any addition or substraction.

And what difference is there, is in the interpretation of some of the verses of Qur'an; and in believing or not believing some of the Sunnah as genuine; or in its interpretation.

This difference of approach has led towards the difference in some beliefs and some laws of Sheriat.

As the basic principles of Islam are well-known, I do not think it necessary to enumerate all the beliefs.

All the Muslims agree that Allah is one; Muhammad is His last Prophet and that one day Allah will resurrect all the human beings and all will be questioned about their beliefs and actions.

All of them agree that anyone not believing in any of the above 3 basic principles is not a Muslim. Also, they agree that anybody denying the famous tenets of Islam, like Prayers, Fasting, Hajj, Zakat etc., or believing that the well-known sins, like drinking wine, adultery, stealing, gambling, lie, murder etc., are not sins, is not a Muslim, though he might be believing in Allah and His Prophet Muhammad, because to deny such well-known Islamic tenets is tantamount to denying the Prophethood of Muhammad and his Sheriat.

When we go further, we come across those subjects which are not agreed amongst the Muslims, and there the differences between different sects of Islam begin.

PERSON OF GOD:

Sunnis say that Allah has body, not like the bodies we know. There is a vast material which can be quoted here describing that belief. But as all the Sunnis nowadays are Ashaira (followers of Abul-Hasan-al-Ashari), I would like to note down his belief on this subject. He says :

"We confess that God is firmly seated on His Throne;...........We confess that God has two hands without asking how,...........We confess that God has a face............ We confess that God has a knowledge........We affirm hearing and sight, and do not deny that, as do the Mutaziia, and Jahmiyya and Khawarij.............We affirm that God has power."
(A. J. Arbery. Revelation and Reason in Islam pp. 22-23; from a quotation from al-Ibana by Abul-Hasan al-Ash-ari).

We, the Shia Ithna-asheris believe that Allah has not got a body: "Verily, Allah is one, unique, nothing is like Him, He is Eternal; Hearing, Seeing, Omniscient, Living, Omnipotent, above every need, He cannot be described in terms of substance, nor body, nor form, nor accident, nor line, nor surface, nor heaviness, nor lightness, nor colour, nor movement, nor rest, nor time, nor space. He is above all the descriptions which can be applied to His creatures."

"He is away from both extremes: Neither He is just a non-entity (as atheists said and in a

lesser degree Mutazilites implied), nor He is just like other things. He is Existent, not like other existing things. (Sheikh As-Saduque : Al-Itiqudiyah).

Of course, there are some verses in the Qur'an which ascribe the words used for limbs to the person of God. But according to the interpretation of our Imams, they are used in metaphorical, not literal sense.

For example, the verse: 'Everything is mortal except His Face' means 'except His Person'. Surely, even the Sunnis cannot say that only the Face of God will remain, while all His so-called limbs will die. Similarly, Allah has used the word 'Hand' in several places in Qur'an. But it means His Power and His Mercy, as in the verse : 'But His Hands are outspread.'

CAN ALLAH BE SEEN ?

As a direct result of the above-mentioned difference, the Sunnis say that Allah can be seen. Some of them, like Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, say that He can be seen in this world, as well as in the life hereafter. Others say that He can be seen in the life hereafter only.

On the other hand, we, the Ithna-asheris, say that He cannot be seen anywhere, because He has no body, and because Allah says in Qur'an : *'Sight cannot reach Him'.*

The Sunnis quote the following verse as their proof: *"Some faces on that day (Akherat) will be fresh, looking towards their Lord."*

But in Arabic language the word 'nadhar' does not imply 'seeing'. Often it is said 'Nadhartu ilal-hilale fa lam arah' (I looked towards the new moon but I did not see it). Therefore, the verse cannot imply that they will see God. According to our interpretation, it means that they will be looking forward for the blessings of Allah.

ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH:

According to Shia Ithna-asheris, Attributes of Allah can be put in two distinct groups : First, those Attributes which denote His Person; second, those Attributes which denote His actions.

Sheikh As-Saduque says :

"For example, we say that Allah was forever Hearing, Seeing, Omniscient Wise, Omnipotent, Having power, Living, Self-Existent, One, and Eternal. And these are His personal Attributes.

“And we do not say that He was from ever Creating, Doing, Intending, Pleased, Displeased, Giving sustenance, Speaking because these Virtues describe His actions; and they are not eternal; it is not allowed to say that Allah was doing all these actions from Eternity.” The reason for this distinction is obvious. Actions need an object. If, for example, we say that Allah was giving sustenance from ever, we will have to admit the existence of sustained things from ever. In other words, we will have to admit that the world was from ever. But it is against our belief and nothing except God is Eternal.

It appears that the Sunnis have no clear view of this distinction. And they say that all His attributes are Eternal. And that was the actual cause of their belief that Qur'an, being the Kalam (speech) of God, is Eternal, not created. Because they said that He was Mutakallim (Speaking) from ever. "The Hambalites so far as said that 'Not only were the words and sounds of Qur'an eternal, so that even its recital was uncreated, but its parchment and binding shared the same qualities..........In the so-called Testament of Abu Hanifa..........a more moderate view is expressed: 'We confess that the Qur'an is the speech of Allah, uncreated, His inspiration, and revelation, not He, yet not other than He, but His real

quality, written in the copies, recited by the tongues............The ink, the paper, the writing are created, for they are the work of men." (A. J. Arbery: Revelation and reason in Islam, pp. 26-27).

But, as we, the Shia Ithna-asheries, distinguish between His personal Virtues and His actions, we say:

Our belief about the Qur'an is that it is the Speech of God, and His Revelation Sent by Him, and His Word and His Book ....And that Allah is its Creator and its Sender and Its Guardian (Al-Itiquadiyah).

The bitter quarrels between two groups of Sunnis (Mutazilites and Asharites) on this subject are well known, and there is no need to narrate them.

PLACE OF REASON IN RELIGION

This is one of the most important distinctions between Sunnis on one side, and the Ithna-asheris on other. To be more exact, I should have used the word Asharites, in place of Sunnis. But all Sunnis nowadays are Asharites. Mutazilite have become extinct long ago, though some of the great scholars of recent times like Justice Amir Ali were Mutazilites.

Anyhow, Shias say that irrespective of religious commandments, there is real merit or demerit in different courses of actions, and it is because a certain thing is good that God orders is, and because the other is bad that He forbids it.

Sunnis deny this conception. They say that nothing is good or evil in itself. Only what God has commanded us is good and what He has forbidden us is evil. If a thing is forbidden by God it is bad; then if God cancels the first order, and allows it, it will become good, after being bad.

In other words, Shias say that God has forbidden us to tell lie because it is bad; Sunnis say that lie has become bad because God has forbidden it.

Shias recognise the relation of cause with effect. Sunnis deny it. They say that there is no cause except Allah. And it is just a habit of Allah that whenever, for example, we drink water He quenches our thirst.

Based upon the above difference of attitude about the position of reason in religion are the following differences :-

Shias say that God never acts without purpose or aim. All His actions are based on wisdom and intelligent purpose. Proof: Because it is not commendable, rationally, to act without purpose. Sunnis on the other hand, because of their denouncement of rational merit or demerit, say that it is quite possible for God to act aimlessly.

It follows that, according to Shias, God does nothing which has inherent demerit in it. Sunnis deny it

Shias say that all actions of Allah are intended for the benefit of His creatures. Because He Himself has no need; and if His actions become devoid of benefits for His creation also, they will become aimless, which is rationally not commendable. Sunnis deny it, because of their stand about rational merit or demerit.

LUTF: GRACE:

Based upon the above differences, is the difference about their attitude towards Grace of Allah.

Shias say that Grace is morally incumbent upon Allah. "By Grace is understood that action

on the part of God which would help to bring His creatures nearer to His devotion and obedience and facilitate their moral correction, (which is) morally incumbent on Him.

.... Allah Has commanded us to be just, while He Himself treats us with something better, namely Grace, Tafadhdhul."

Sunnis, on the other hand, say: God leadeth astray whom He wills and guideth aright whom He wills, and it is not incumbent upon God Most High to do that which may be best for the creature, (creed of al-Nasafi.)

GOD'S PROMISES:

Based upon our stand on Justice and Grace is our view that: Whatever God has promised as reward for a good work, He will fulfil it; but whatever He has threatened as punishment for a bad work, it is upon His descretion : If He meted out the punishment it will be by His Justice; if He forgives it, it will be by His Grace. (Sheikh As-Saduq : Al-Itiquadiyah).

We are confronted both by Kharijites and Mutazilites on one side and Ash-arites on other side. Mutazilites and Kharijites say that it is incumbent upon God to fulfil His threats also. He has no power to forgive. Asharites, on the other hand say that it is not incumbent upon Him even to fulfil His promises of rewards. They go so far as to say : Even if Allah were to send the prophets in Hell, and Satan in Paradise, it would not be against virtue, because there was no inherent demerit in any action.

WHY BELIEVE IN GOD :

Shias say: Man is obliged by his reason to know God, and to obey His commands. In other words, necessity of religion is proved, first of all, by reason

Sunnis say: Reason has nothing to do with anything. Of course, it is necessary to believe in Allah, but not on account of reason. It is necessary because Allah has ordered us to know Him. According to Shiite view, this type of proof creates a vicious circle. Believe in God. Why ? Because God has ordered it. But we do not know who is God. Why should we obey Him ?

LIMIT OF LAW?

Shias say: God cannot give us a command beyond our strength, because it is wrong rationally. Sunnis do not agree with this reasoning.

OUR ACTIONS: TAQDEER :

Are our actions really ours? Or are we just a tool in the hands of Allah ? Shias say : Taqdeer means that 'Allah possesses foreknowledge of human actions. But He does not compel any man to act in any particular way." (Al-Itiquadiyah).

To make it clear, it should be explained here, that Man's conditions or actions are of two kinds: (1) Those actions about which he can be advised, ordered, praised or blamed. Such actions are within his power and are dependent upon his will. (2) Such conditions about which he cannot be praised or blamed, like life, death, etc. Such conditions are outside his sphere of will or power. For example, we can advise a patient to consult this or that doctor and remain under his treatment; but we cannot advise him to become cured. Why this difference? Because getting treatment is under his power, but getting cured it not in his power. It is something which comes from Allah.

But even our freedom of action is a gift of Allah. He has given that power, that freedom, the

strength, the limbs, the wisdom and everything with which we do any work. Therefore, we are not independent of Allah, because our freedom is not only given but even sustained by Him. But our actions are not compelled by God, because He, after showing us the right and wrong ways, and after enjoining us to do right has left us to our own free will. If we go right, it is by our own good sense. If we go wrong, it is our own choice. As Sheikh As-Saduq says : "Our belief in this respect is what has been taught by Imam Jafar Sadique: “There is no compulsion (by God) and no relinquishing the authority (of God); but a condition between these two conditions.” Then Imam was asked : How is it ? He said: “Suppose you saw a man Intending to commit a sin; and you forbade him; but he did not listen to you; and you left him; and he did commit that sin. Now when he did not listen to you and you left him, it cannot be said that you ordered him or allowed him to sin.” (Al-Itiquadiyah).

In other words, we believe that God have given us power and will and then has left us free to do what we like. At the same time, He has taught us, through the Prophets, what is right and what is wrong. Now, as He is Omniscient, He knows what will be our actions at various times of our life. But this knowledge does not make Him responsible for our actions more than a meteorologist can be responsible for cyclones and storms, if his forecasts come true. True forecasts are the result, not the cause, of the impending event. Sunnis on the other hand say that Allah is the creator of all our acts. "No act of any individual, even though it be done purely for his benefit is independent of the will of Allah for its existence; and there does not occur in either in physical or extra-terrestrial world the wink of an eye, the hint of a thought, or the most sudden glance, except by the decree of Allah .... of His power, desire and will. This includes evil and good, benefit and hurt, success and failure, sin and righteousness, obedience and disobedience, polytheism and belief. (Al-Ghazali: as quoted in Shia of India p. 43).

PROPHETHOOD :

Based upon their belief of Lutf (Grace), Shias believe that it is incumbent upon Allah to send Prophets or their successors in this world to guide people to right path. Sunnis say that it is not incumbent upon Allah, because they do not accept necessity of Lutf.

SINLESSNESS :

What is our conception of Ismah? It is Lutf (Grace) of Allah which helps a person to refrain from sins, without effecting in any way his will and power. A Masum (sinless) person has power to commit sins; but he does not even think about sins because his spiritual standard is so high that such inferior things do not enter his mind.

Sunnis do not speak with one voice upon this subject: They first differ about the point when Ismah begins. Some say it is after the declaration of Prophethood; others that it is since childhood.

Second Difference : Scope of Ismah before declaration of prophethood : Some say that it covers all sins; majority says that they are protected from Kufr (infedility) only.

Third Difference: Scope of Ismah after declaration of Prophethood : it is agreed that the Prophets could not tell a lie after prophethood. But what about other sins ? Some say that they could commit other sins either intentionally or unintentionally; but the majority says that they could commit it unintentionally, but not intentionally.

Fourth Difference : About minor sins : They say it was possible for the prophets to commit minor sins, even intentionally; but they were protected from such minor sins which might have degraded them in the esteem of people.

Shia Ithna-asheris' stand about Ismah is that all the prophets were sinless and infalliable; they could not commit any sin, whether capital or minor, and whether intentionally or unintentionally; and that they were Masum from the beginning of their life till their last breath.

THE PROPHETS:

Sheikh As-Saduq says about prophets that :-

"their word is the word of God, their order is the order of God, their forbidding is the forbidding by God........And that the Chiefs of the prophet are five — and they are (called) Ulul-azm — and they are Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad, Be Blessings of Allah upon them all: and that Muhammad is their Chief and best of all. (Al-Itiquadiyah).

IMAMS :

Shias say that Imam must be appointed by God; that appointment may be known through the declaration of the Prophet or the preceding Imam.

Sunnis say that Imam (or Caliph, as they prefer to say) can be either elected, or nominated by the preceding Caliph, or selected by a committee, or may acquire power through military strength. If he is elected, it is enough that one man should do bai-at (declare allegiance) to him.

Shias say: that Imam must be Masum (sinless). Sunnis say (including Mutazilites) that Ismah is not a condition for Khilafat. Hanbalites, Shafiites and Malikites do not allow people to rise against a Caliph even if he is tyrant and sunk in sins. They say that they should suffer patiently.

Shias say that Imam must be above all persons in such qualities as bravery, justice, wisdom, piety, love of God etc. Sunnis say it is not necessary. A person inferior in these qualities may be elected in preference to a person having all these qualities in superior degree.

Shias say that Ali was appointed by Allah to be the successor of the Prophet, and that the Prophet declared it on several occasions.

Sunnis say that the Prophet did not appoint anybody to be his successor.

(Appendix 'C') SPACE TRAVEL

The Americans' landing on the Moon was welcomed throughout the world as a great leap forward for the mankind. But there is a section in East Africa which is sceptical to it, on the grounds that "it is impossible to go to the heavenly bodies."

This declaration brings to mind the retrogress of knowledge amongst the Muslims. It is really very tragic to see the followers of Islam sinking to the lowest level of ignorance, while it was Islam, which declared that "to seek knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman;" and it was Islam which exhorted its followers to learn, to observe and to think, and whose prophet said "I am the City of knowledge and Ali is its Gate."

This attitude of mind is not just a result of the low standard of Islamic learning in East Africa where anybody who can speak a few Arabic words claims to be a "sheikh".

In fact, the root of this ignorance goes far deep in the Islamic history. The real cause of this ignorance is that the Muslims left "the Gate of Knowledge" and as a result had to beg from each and every house.

This led them to the pagan Greek philosophy. They devoured it and treated as if it were the God-sent revelation. How deep was their devotion to that pagan thinking can be easily gauged if we take, for example, the subject of astronomy and see what was the view of Islam, and what the Greek view and then see what the Muslims believed to be the untarnished truth.

Without going into details, I will give here the list of the Ptolemic theory about skies :

That theory declared that earth was the centre of universe and was static; that there were nine skies around it, all round, transparent and having life and intelligence; that these skies were one upon another like the layers of onion, without any gap in between; that they were eternal and intelligent beings; that they were moving eternally; that the moon, sun, mars, venus, and other stars were fixed in the skies and that there was no gap or opening in the skies nor can they be cut, or opened in any way.

And what did Islam teach? It said that the skies were made of a substance which is like steam or smoke, that they are not solid, that the stars and planets "swim" in them, that there was space between one sky and the next; that the angels of God lived in them, that there were paths and gates in them etc. etc.

Now look at what the majority of the Muslims (other than the Shias) believed. They believed that Ptolemy was right, and declared (not in words but by their behaviour) that the verses of the Quran did not explain the whole truth! So they tried to interpret the Qur'an in such a way as to make it conform with the pagan Greek philosophy,

Result: All the Islamic facts which did not fit in the Greek scheme of universe were distorted, reinterpreted, twisted or outright rejected. Take the example of the heavenly journey of the Holy Prophet.

It was one of the greatest miracles given to our Holy Prophet. Miracles are such performances which are not impossible, but which cannot be done without apparatus, medicine or practice. But the Prophet performs them without any practice, medicine or machinery. For example, curing the blind or lepers is not impossible. But Jesus Christ

cured them without any medicine and that was his miracle.

So when our Holy Prophet went to the heavens in his life-time, it was a clear indication to the Muslims that space-journey is not impossible. But did the Muslims believe him ? Apart from the Shias and some Sunnis, all said that it was not possible. Why ? Because according to Ptolemy, skies have no opening, there is no space between the skies and all the non-sense which has been described above.

Therefore, they said that the 'Miraaj' was just a dream seen by the Holy Prophet.

Strangely, they got many allies from many quarters. Foremost among them: Banu Umayya and Ahmadiyyas.

Banu Umayya whose interest in Islam was based not upon faith but upon politics, did not like the idea of any miracle of the Holy Prophet gaining ground in the minds of the Muslims. And their department of 'forgery' obliged them in this respect also.

Two 'traditions' from that department are repeatedly described by the Christians, Ahmadis and majority of the Sunnis.

1. Aisha, wife of the Holy Prophet is alleged to say that the whole night of Miraaj, the body of the Holy Prophet was on the bed.
2. Moavia is claimed to say that Miraaj was a "true dream."

Now the fact is that the Miraaj (whatever its interpretation) is believed to be in Mecca one or 3 years before the Hijrat.

Bibi Aisha did not enter the house of the Holy Prophet until one year after Hijrat. How could she say that she did not miss the body of the Holy Prophet at that time ?

There is only one possible explanation: This "tradition" was forged by someone who did not know the sequence of Islamic history. Otherwise he could not have attributed this "tradition" to Aisha.

And, Moavia was such an enemy of the Holy Prophet that when 8 years after Hijrat Mecca was entered into without bloodshed and Abu Sufyan (father of Moavia) seeing no alternative, accepted Islam, Moavia fled to Bahrain and wrote a nasty letter to his father condemning him on his acceptance of Islam. It was not till 9th year of Hijrat that he brought himself to profess Islam. And Miraaj was 10 or 12 years before that time. How could he know what were its facts ? He does not mention his source of information, and the inference is that there was no such source.

If you want to see how politics controlled the Islam of Umayyads, see one more "tradition" invented in their factory.

The King on Damascus throne is Abdul-Malik bin Marwan. Iraq and Hijaz are in the hands of Abdullah bin Zubair. Abdul Malik does not like the idea of the pilgrims of his domain being obliged to go to Mecca (which is in his enemy's hands). So, he wants to enhance the prestige of Baitul Muqaddas which is in his domain and plans to establish "Hajj" at Baitul Muqaddas. As a part of that plan, all previous declarations that the Miraaj was a dream were forgotten and a tradition was forged that the final destination of the journey of Miraaj was Baitul Muqaddas.

Soon after that Abdullah bin Zubair was defeated and Hejaz came under Syria. Otherwise, we would surely have seen two centres of Hajj in Muslim world.

The Christians revived the "traditions" of Aisha and Moavia. See, for example, the translation of the Holy Qur'an by Rev. Rodwell.

Here the interest of the Ahmadis coincided with that of the Christians, because, it was to

their advantage to deny that anybody could go to heavens. Therefore, they also repeatedly mention these two "traditions" without knowing that these so called traditions have no basis at all.

Anyhow, let us see why our Holy Prophet was given that miracle. Every prophet was given a miracle concerning those very things which were highly advanced in his time. Witchcraft was prevalent in the days of Prophet Musa, therefore, he was given the miracles of his walking stick, and brightening hand.

As the Nubuwwat of our Holy Prophet was to continue up to the Day of Judgment, and, as during his Nubuwwat, people were to advance in space-travel, God gave him the miracle of Miraaj which can never be surpassed, because scientists will always go there by spacecrafts, but our Holy Prophet went to the utmost distance without any aid from any machine. That is his miracle and this miracle will always command respect from all those who do think.

(Appendix 'D') I FOLLOWED THE LIGHT OF ALLAH
By Dhikiri Omari M. Kiondo

MY acceptance of Shiaism is wonderful and was due to Allah's good Guidance and Mercy. I had never heard of Shiaism before, although I had been an active Quranic pupil for at least six years.

I was schooling in one of the Missionary schools in Tanzania. In a history lesson, my teacher (who was very much accustomed to mocking the Muslim pupils in the class) said, "Muslims in East Africa are of two 'divisions' Sunnis and Shias, Dhikiri, did you know this before ?"

"No Sir. What I know is that I am a Sunni", I shyly replied.

It was a shame to me. A Muslim who doesn't know important things about Islam !

For the first time I have heard the word "Shia".

The teacher explained that these people "Shias" oppose the majority of the Muslims. This sentence remained in my thoughts for years.

Whenever I asked my religious leaders about it, no clear answer was given. I was just told, "Those people are against the Quran. God's Messenger had no heir", which seemed to be their only reply to this question.

At last I thought that the cause of difference was difficult for me to understand.

Again, another "Force" made me find more about other Muslim sects. It was the question of the responsibility of our actions. I was taught that if a person does something good or evil, it is because Allah guided him to do so. if this is the case, then, it means that Allah Himself has created two groups of people : one for paradise and another for hell. It did not seem justice to me.

In February, 1968, I came into contact with an African Sheikh. I tried to question him about the question "Will of God."

From that point, the said Sheikh introduced Shiaism into my mind.

In March, 1968, I sent many questions to the Shia Ithna-asheri Council of Tanzania, Dares Salaam. The questions were passed to Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi, who since then has been answering my questions with much care, politeness and humbleness.

Maulana S. S. Akhtar Rizvi opened my eyes. I found that all my doubts were easily removed through Shia doctrines. I felt that the way to the peace of mind was the way of Shiaism.

We (my wife and I) gradually were convinced of the truth of Shiaism. But it was a difficult decision to go against the ancestral beliefs.

I was not sure whether I was a Muslim, since I still was keeping my eyes closed, inspite of Allah's Guidance. I know I worshipped none except Him, Nor did I associate anything with Him. But I was perturbed because I knew that my persistence in going against Allah's Guidance would ruin me.

At last, my wife and I decided to follow the words and guidance of Allah. We accepted Shiaism.

I thank Allah for His True Guidance and Mercy.

May He Reward anyone who has given or is going to give me a helping hand to acquire true Islamic knowledge. May He glorify Islam. May He glorify Shiaism all over the world. May He give Unity to all Muslims. May He accept our Dua and Tauba. May He bless His Messenger Muhammad (s.a.w.), his Ummat, his friends and his Ahlul-Bait with peace and give them plenty of Heavenly Rewards. Ameen.